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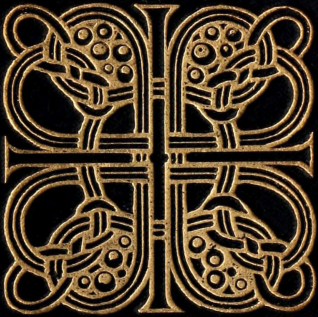

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THE CENTURY BIBLE

A MODERN COMMENTARY

EDITED BY

PRINCIPAL W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

THE GENERAL EPISTLES

JAMES, PETER, JOHN, AND JUDE

EDITED BY

W. H. BENNETT, Litt.D., D.D.

OXFORD
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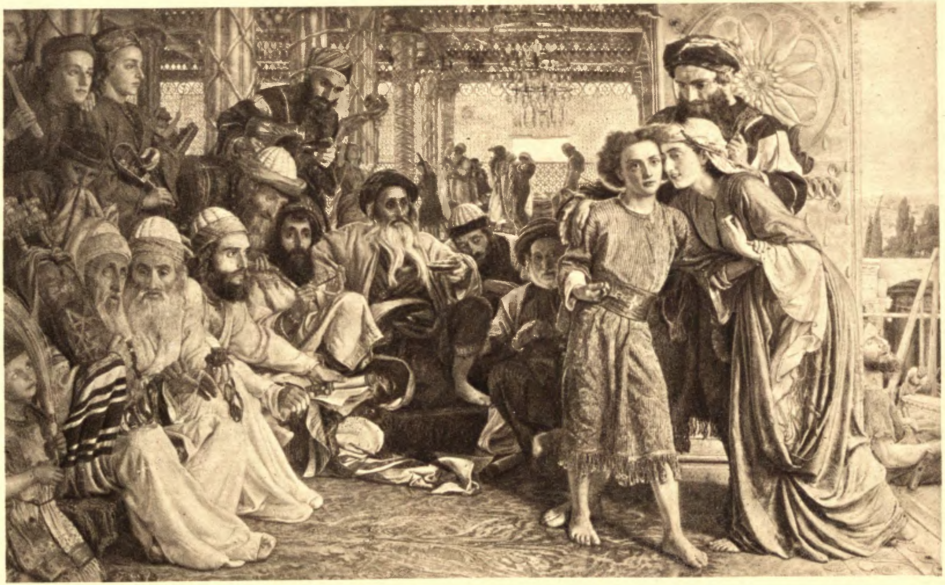

THE FINDING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

BY W. HOLMAN HUNT.

The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

The General Epistles

James, Peter, John, and Jude

INTRODUCTION
AUTHORIZED VERSION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

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EDITED BY

W. H. BENNETT, LITT.D., D.D.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

Editor's Introduction 1

Text of the Authorized Version 101

Text of the Revised Version with Annotations . . 143

Index 345

MAP

Asia Minor and Greece (to illustrate 1 Pet. 11) . . 96

PLATES

The Finding of Christ in the Temple (Holman Hunt) *Photogravure frontispiece*

Nazareth (in colour) 64

View in Jerusalem (from a drawing) 144

The Fords of Jordan (from a drawing) 192

Fountain at Jericho (from a drawing) 240

The Dead Sea, Jericho, and the Mouth of the Jordan (from a drawing) 304

THE GENERAL EPISTLES

INTRODUCTION

Title. The General or Catholic Epistles comprise James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, 1, 2, and 3 John; they are so called because some of them are addressed to Christians in *general*, or groups of churches, and not, like St. Paul's Epistles, to particular churches. The inclusion of 2 and 3 John in this group is a mere matter of convenience, as they are not *general*, but addressed to individuals or to particular churches[1]. Other less probable views are that 'Catholic' means (i) the work of the apostles generally as distinguished from the collection of Pauline Epistles; (ii) universally recognized; (iii) containing 'Catholic,' i.e. orthodox doctrine. The order in the MSS. and lists sometimes differs from that in the English Bible, which follows the oldest authorities. They are also variously placed, the most usual positions for the group being either between Acts and the Pauline Epistles, or, as in our Bibles, between the Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews) and the Apocalypse. By an exhaustive process, as neither historical nor Pauline, these Epistles naturally came to form a separate group; it is not known how early this arrangement was adopted, but the term 'Catholic' for these Epistles occurs from the time of Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200) onwards. In the MSS. these Epistles always stand together, and there are separate MSS. containing either the Catholic Epistles alone, or these with the Acts.

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[1] Cf. p. 89.

Importance of the General Epistles. Later on we shall enter into various details, which will shew that the evidence as to the date and authorship of these Epistles is conflicting, that scholars are divided in their opinion, and that consequently a measure of uncertainty attaches to any conclusions on the subject. Here we shall anticipate some leading points, and shew their bearing on the value and significance of this section of the New Testament.

(i) *Signatures.* No express statements are made by the books themselves as to their dates, and in some cases none as to their authorship. The titles were not parts of the books themselves, but were added later on by unknown hands some time before A. D. 300. Apart from the titles, 1 John is anonymous; the author of 2 and 3 John simply styles himself 'the elder'; the authors of James and Jude style themselves 'James,' and 'Judas the brother of James,' respectively; 1 and 2 Peter, however, expressly name as their author Peter the apostle.

(ii) *Ambiguous names.* If the names James, John, and Judas are accepted as those of authors, they do not clearly tell us who the authors were; three Jameses, five Johns, and six Judases occur in the New Testament; various Jameses, Johns, and Judases occur in Josephus, and in the church history of the first two centuries. Most of these, of course, could not have written any of the General Epistles; but the mere name John or James no more fixed a man's identity then than Smith or Jones does now. It happens, for instance, that three distinguished Old Testament scholars of the last half of the nineteenth century were named Smith—W. R. Smith, G. A. Smith, H. P. Smith; and it is quite probable that about the close of the first century the names John and James may each have been borne by more than one distinguished teacher.

(iii) *Date and authorship.* The questions of date and authorship mutually depend on one another. If we know who wrote a book, we can fix the period within which it was written. If we can shew when it was written, we obviously know that its author must have been some one who lived at that time. 1 Peter and 1 John were certainly in circulation at the beginning of the second century, and are known to have been attributed to Peter and John respectively before its close. Jude and 2 John are known to have been in circulation and attributed to Jude and John the apostle about the middle of the second century. James was in circulation then, but its author is not named till the beginning of the third century. The first certain traces of 2 Peter and 3 John occur early in the third century, when their ascription to Peter and John is mentioned, but not fully accepted.

(iv) *Canonicity.* By the close of the fourth century 1 Peter and 1 John had been included in the New Testament by common consent, and their position has never since been challenged. In A. D. 324, Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, the most learned biblical scholar of his times, drew up a list of the various books held to be canonical, i.e. part of the New Testament, arranging them in four classes, according to the degree in which they were accepted. He placed 1 Peter and 1 John in his first class of *Homologoumena*, or books universally accepted. All the other General Epistles he placed in his second class of *Antilegomena*, or books to which objections had been raised[1]. Doubts as to 2 Peter were widespread; hesitation as to James was specially prevalent in the Western, as to Jude, 2 and 3 John in the Eastern Church. The Syrian Church especially long continued to ignore 2 Peter, Jude, 2 and 3 John. At the Reformation, Luther and others proposed to treat Eusebius' *Antilegomena* as of inferior authority, because they were not fully accepted by the primitive church. On the other hand, these Epistles have been fully accepted as canonical during many centuries, by the great bulk of the church.

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[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, ch. 25.

(v) *Present state of opinion.* To summarize the present position of critical opinion is even more difficult than to estimate the significance of available evidence ; so that the following statement can only be regarded as a rough approximation, in which care has been taken not to exaggerate difficulties. There is not a complete agreement as to the date and authorship of any of these Epistles. Even in the case of James, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Jude, the scholars who deny apostolic authorship are sufficiently numerous and distinguished to prevent our speaking of such a practical consensus of opinion in its favour, as exists in the case of the longer Pauline Epistles. Nevertheless, the weight of critical opinion supports the apostolic authorship of 1 Peter, 1 John, and Jude, and in a less degree of James and 2 and 3 John. The authorship of the Johannine Epistles is sometimes ascribed to John the Presbyter. On the other hand, while there are still scholars who ascribe 2 Peter to the Apostle, the weight of opinion is decidedly against its apostolic authorship.

(vi) *Value of the Epistles.* The uncertainty as to the date and authorship affects the significance rather than the value of these books ; we shall not find that they are less important than we supposed, but we may find that one or other of them is important in a different way. They are certainly documents of the first two centuries, for the most part not much later, in any case, than A.D. 100, even if they are not still earlier, and are therefore first-rate witnesses to the life and religion of the primitive church. We know so little of those two centuries that if these Epistles had disappeared we should have suffered a grievous loss of evidence for the early ecclesiastical history. Every recovery of fragments of the literature of this period—such as the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and the *Logia* of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri—is hailed with enthusiasm, and arouses universal interest. The importance attached to these discoveries reminds us of the value of the treasures preserved for us in this section of the New Testament.

Moreover, apart from any decision as to authorship, we know that these Epistles were attributed to apostles by many distinguished Christian scholars of the third and later centuries. Hence they represent apostolic teaching as it was understood in the early church. No one would have accepted an Epistle as John's, for instance, unless its contents had been consistent with what was known of the teaching of the apostles. Even if any of these works are later than A.D. 100, they still set forth what was taught, and probably rightly taught, on the authority of the apostles at the beginning of the second century. Again, the Catholic Epistles have been accepted for centuries by the great majority of Christians as part of the Sacred Scriptures; they have been read in the public services of the church, have been the subject of voluminous comment and exposition, and have furnished texts for innumerable sermons. In other words they are recommended to our earnest and docile study by the hearts and minds and consciences of devout Christians in all ages. If we accord to them such study, their teaching will itself assert its authority over us. Who would deny the inspiration of books which first told the world that 'God is love[1],' and that God is the giver of 'every good and perfect gift[2]'?

We can, however, only make a somewhat modified use of 2 Peter as an authority for the Apostle's life, character, and teaching. We are not sure that it is the Apostle's own account of himself and his views; it may be only some one else's attempt to expound Peter's teaching.

The present state of evidence and opinion as to the other six Epistles may fairly be maintained to warrant the following practical attitude towards them, as witnesses to the history of religious life and thought. The reader has a right to treat them as apostolic for such purposes, but he should remember that no fundamental fact or doctrine of Christianity is dependent on either their early date or their apostolic authorship. The questions involved belong to those secondary matters, as to which the most earnest Christians may differ, while remaining united on all the essentials of faith.

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[1] 1 John iv. 8, 16.

[2] Jas. i. 17.

Two difficulties may be noticed. First, it may be urged that the test of canonicity in the early church was apostolic authorship, that books were included in the New Testament because they were believed to be by Peter, or James, or John. Hence it may seem that unless we are quite certain that these books were written by apostles, we have no right to include them in the Bible. But in deciding as to apostolic authorship, the church was greatly influenced by the intrinsic merits of a book; so that its favourable judgement meant quite as much that the book was worthy to be placed in the Bible and therefore might be accepted as apostolic, as that the book was apostolic and therefore canonical. Moreover, authorship in the early church was often understood very loosely; a book might be spoken of as Peter's simply because its teaching was that of Peter. Origen, for instance, expressly states that God only knows who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, but he often cites it as 'Paul[1].' There is no question as to the canonicity of these books; no one would propose to exclude an Epistle from the Bible because it turned out not to have been written by the apostle whose name it bore, and to have been published half a century later than was once supposed.

The second difficulty is that if the traditional views prove to have been mistaken, some of the books apparently claim to have been written by persons who were not their authors. This, of course, could not apply to the Johannine Epistles, which make no statement as to the name of their author, nor to James and Jude, which do not tell us which of the many Jameses and Judes are meant. But both 1 and 2 Peter are written in the name of the Apostle. Hence what seems at first sight a serious difficulty. Is not this an attempt to deceive the reader? We may be told that the reader was deceived for his own good; that the teaching of the Epistles is true and helpful; that the author feared that his readers might neglect his writings and suffer spiritual loss if he published them in his own name, and that therefore he used Peter's name in order to gain a hearing. Such reasoning does not satisfy a modern Western conscience. We find it hard to believe that Divine inspiration, and a deliberate attempt to deceive, even for a good end, can go hand in hand. Possibly, however, such a combination would not have perplexed the conscience of the ancient East. Compare, for instance, the narrative in 2 Kings vi. According to verse 19, Elisha told a deliberate falsehood, though at the time he was acting under immediate Divine inspiration in other matters. It is sometimes held that inspiration did not always raise its subjects above the level of current morality. However, such matters may safely be left to experts in systematic theology; the canonicity of these Epistles can be justified on other grounds.

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[1] Because, as he tells us, he considered that the ideas and teaching were those of the Apostle.

First, as we have already said, there was a loose notion that a writer might lawfully be styled the author of a work which was believed to be an accurate exposition of his teaching. The author of such an exposition might have said that if his readers accepted the work as Peter's, they were not deceived, because the only important part, the teaching, *was* Peter's. The mere words did not matter.

Secondly, there is evidence that this view was current in the first three centuries[1]. Hence we have no right to say that because a book is written in the name of Peter therefore it claims to have been written by him, and is a fraudulent composition if any one else was the actual author. The method of writing a book in the first person, in the name of some well-known character, not the author, has been practised and recognized in all periods of literary activity. It is merely a literary device adopted for the sake of effect, and perfectly understood. To quote a well-known instance, some time since an imaginative description of early church life was published in the form of an autobiography of the Onesimus of Philemon. It is in the first person, and the author has done his best to make it read as if it had actually been written by Onesimus; he does not give his own name, or furnish any statement explaining the pseudonymous character of the book. Yet, of course, he neither expected nor intended that any one should suppose that the book had been written by Onesimus; and the character of the book was at once understood by everybody. If 2 Peter was not written by the Apostle, it may be a work of the same kind; written in perfect good faith, and accepted by its readers as what it really was. In the Old Testament we have a whole group of such works, viz. Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and Daniel; and we may throw a side-light on the questions involved in the authorship of 2 Peter, by quoting some remarks on the fact that the Book of Daniel is written in the name of Daniel.

Prof. A. Kamphausen, in his article on Daniel in Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopædia Biblica*[2], writes: 'Upon the basis of his study of earlier writers, and conscious of his own Divine enlightenment, the author wrote his work of admonition and comfort in the name of the ancient Daniel; it is only ignorance or misapprehension that can lay to his charge as a fault his employment of a literary form which was common throughout antiquity. . . . The people who were in the secret were able to recognize, in what he wrote, the circumstances of their own time, although only darkly alluded to.' Prof. A. A. Bevan, in his *Commentary on Daniel*[1], writes: 'The genesis of this literature[2] offers, it is true, a very difficult psychological problem. Some, at least, of the apocalyptic writers may have believed that they were inspired to reproduce lost revelations; but however we may account for the fact, it is certain that age after age men whose sincerity cannot be questioned put forth writings in the names of ancient prophets and sages.'

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[1] See *Biblical Introduction,* Bennett and Adeney, pp. 7 ff.

[2] 1 Col. 1011 f.

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[1] p. 24.

[2] The apocalyptic literature of which Daniel is the earliest known example.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

'James,' in i. 1 the brother of the Lord. It is possible, but not probable, that the 'James' of i. 1 was some distinguished Christian teacher not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament or in the literature of the early church.

Turning to the Jameses of the New Testament, James the son of Zebedee is excluded by the early date, A. D. 44, of his martyrdom[1].

Of James the son of Alphæus nothing is told us beyond the bare fact that he was an apostle, and, if he is to be identified with James the Less, that his mother's name was Mary and his brother's Joses. The only passages in which his name occurs are the lists of the Twelve in the Gospels and Acts, and the list of the women who stood by the cross, amongst whom were 'Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses[2].' It seems unlikely that any one who made so little mark on history ever occupied the position of authority claimed by the author of our Epistle. If the son of Alphæus and James the Less were distinct personages, the likelihood that either of them wrote the Epistle is even less.

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[1] Acts xii. 2.

[2] Mark xv. 40. On the theory that James the son of Alphæus was identical with James the brother of the Lord, see below, p. 25.

There remains James the brother of the Lord. The references to this James in Acts, Galatians, and in various works of the first four centuries, shew that he enjoyed great influence and distinction, especially amongst Jewish Christians; so that he could speak with authority to 'the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion'; and 'James' without any further description would be fully understood to be this remarkable and conspicuous leader in the early church. Hence it is generally held that 'James' in i. 1 is intended to mean James the brother of the Lord.

Assuming that this view is correct, we have next to consider whether the Epistle was actually written by James[1].

Date: traces in early literature. It will be convenient to postpone for a while the consideration of the direct evidence as to the name of the author, in order to attempt to determine the date, which will obviously have an important bearing on the question of authorship. We may ask first, What traces of our Epistle are found in the early Christian literature? Such traces may partly consist of passages similar to phrases and sentences in James. Here, however, we are constantly confronted by a serious difficulty, which we must always be prepared to take into account. A similarity between two documents, A and B, may be accounted for in three ways: A may have used B; B may have used A; both A and B may depend upon some third source—a document, or oral tradition, or the set of words, phrases, sayings, and ideas, which are the common stock-in-trade of a period, a church, or a school of thought. Hence if we find similar phrases in James and in some other work we must not at once assume that the author of the other work was acquainted with James, but should be prepared to consider the possibility that the author of James was acquainted with the other work, or that the resemblances are due to the fact that the two works belong to the same period and circle of Christian teaching. The latter is often a very probable explanation[1].

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[1] Cf. pp. 4 ff.

There are parallels between James and the Pauline Epistles, e. g. :—

Jas. i. 22, 'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.'

Rom. ii. 13, 'For not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified.'

Jas. iv. 1, 'Your pleasures that war in your members.'

Rom. vii. 23, 'I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.'

Moreover, at first sight at any rate, the discussion of the relation of faith and works in Jas. ii. 14–26 reads like a correction of Paul's teaching as to justification by faith in Rom. iv and Gal. iii. Such resemblances have led Prof. J. B. Mayor[2] and others to conclude that the author of our Epistle was acquainted with *Romans* and perhaps some other Pauline Epistles; but, possibly, they may be accounted for by the connexion of both works with prior Jewish and Christian teaching.

There are also parallels with Hebrews, 1 Peter, and other Epistles, e.g. :—

Jas. iii. 18, 'The fruit of righteousness . . . in peace.'

Heb. xii. 11, 'Peaceable fruit . . . of righteousness.'

It is only, however, in the case of 1 Peter and James[3] that there is any strong reason for believing that one author made use of the other's work. The resemblances between these two Epistles are numerous and striking. Both are addressed to the Dispersion. Both make the following quotations from the Old Testament :—

Isa. xl. 7, 'The grass withereth and the flower falleth.' Jas. i. 11; 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

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[1] Cf. *Biblical Introduction*, Bennett and Adeney, p. 38.

[2] Commentary on James, p. 143.

[3] Apart from the Pauline Epistles.

Prov. iii. 34, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5[1].

Jas. iv. 7, 10, 'Be subject therefore unto God. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.'

1 Pet. v. 6, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.'

Prov. x. 12, 'Love covereth all transgressions'; cf. Jas. v. 20, 'He which converteth a sinner . . . shall cover a multitude of sins'; 1 Pet. iv. 8, 'Love covereth a multitude of sins[2].'

Again, our Epistle has much in common with the Sermon on the Mount, e.g.:—

Jas. iii. 12, 'Can a fig-tree . . . yield olives, or a vine figs?'

Matt. vii. 16, 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'

Jas. ii. 13, 'Judgement is without mercy to him that hath shewed no mercy.'

Matt. v. 7, 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.'

Matt. vii. 2, 'With what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged.'

Jas. v. 12, 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgement.'

Matt. v. 34-37, 'Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea: Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.'

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[1] Both follow the Greek version (LXX) though it differs from the Hebrew; and both add the same exhortation.

[2] Here both follow the Hebrew, though the LXX has a different rendering.

Thus a comparison of James with the rest of the New Testament does not give any certain results as to date. It is not clear that any other New Testament writer was acquainted with our Epistle. At the same time, the parallels between this and the other books seem consistent with a date in the apostolic period. It is, indeed, a little difficult to understand either how a writer who shews so little interest in, or sympathy with, the teaching of Paul should have been influenced by the Epistle to the Romans; or how Paul should have been influenced by this Epistle. But yet a writer of the apostolic period must have moved in circles familiar with the ideas and sayings of Paul, Peter, and our Lord; and his work might very well exhibit such resemblances to the other Epistles and the Gospels as are actually found in the Epistle of James[1].

We pass next to the writings of Apostolic Fathers, belonging to the close of the first century and to the second century. These works narrowly escaped being included in the New Testament, and are the earliest Christian literature outside the Bible. They were all written in Greek. Here, too, we find parallels with James; e.g. Clement, a distinguished teacher of the Church of Rome, perhaps its bishop, writing to the Church of Corinth, about A.D. 95, speaks of Rahab being saved 'on account of her faith and hospitality.' It seems certain that Clement was acquainted with Hebrews; so that it is probable, though not absolutely certain, that as he derived the idea of Rahab's faith from Heb. xi. 31, so her 'salvation by hospitality' was suggested by Jas. ii. 25, 'Was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?'

The *Shepherd of Hermas* is a collection of parables and allegories, published at Rome about A.D. 130–160;

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[1] Cf. p. 13.

and was as popular in its day as *Pilgrim's Progress* is now. It has a section on 'double-mindedness,' *dipsuchia*, which reminds us of Jas. i. 8, 'A doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways[1],' and other parallels with this Epistle, e.g.:

Jas. iv. 7: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

Hermas, *Mandate* xii. 5: 'The devil can wrestle with you, but cannot throw you. If therefore ye resist him, he will flee from you, vanquished and put to shame.'

The *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, is a pamphlet, a short manual of Christian life and church order, composed about A.D. 100. The *Didache*, too, denounces 'double-mindedness,' thus: chap. 2, 'Thou shalt not be doubleminded, *dignomon*, nor doubletongued, *diglossos*, for doubletonguedness, *diglossia*, is a deadly snare'; and, chap. 4, 'Thou shalt not be in two minds, *dipsucheseis*, whether (to do justice) or not.' Cf. also Jas. v. 16, 'Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.'

Didache iv: 'In the church thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and shalt not come forward for thy prayer with an evil conscience.'

These may illustrate the kind of parallels between our Epistle and the Apostolic Fathers[2], which are sometimes held to prove that these writers were acquainted with James, and that therefore the Epistle must have been written before the close of the first century A.D. The more general opinion, however, is that the mutual resemblances do not amount to a proof that James was known by the Apostolic Fathers; they might possibly be due to the use of the latter by the author of the Epistle; or, more probably, may indicate that the Epistle belonged to the same period, and emanated from the same school of Christian teaching as some of the other works. On the other hand, the comparison of the Epistle and the works of the Apostolic Fathers does not afford any ground for denying that the former was in existence when the latter were being written.

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[1] Cf. Jas. iv. 8.

[2] Similar, but as a rule less striking, parallels to those given above are found in the *Letter to Diognetus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, in the second century, and in *Barnabas* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in the first century.

We turn next to the translations of the New Testament and other documents belonging to the close of the second and the beginning of the third century. Our Epistle is included in the Old Latin Version, and in the Peshitto or Syriac Version[1]. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, a native of Asia Minor, in his work *Against Heresies*, completed about A.D. 180, says of Abraham, 'He believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God[2].' This is generally regarded as a quotation from Jas. ii. 23. So far, however, none of the passages referred to as possible traces of our Epistle are given as citations from James, or indeed as citations at all; but are simply interwoven into the work of the various writers, as phrases and verses of Scripture often are into modern sermons and religious books. Hence the difficulty of knowing when we have actually discovered a trace of James[3]. But Origen, who taught at Alexandria, Cæsarea, and elsewhere from A.D. 203 to A.D. 254, expressly mentions the statement that faith without works is dead as occurring is an Epistle ascribed to James.

On the other hand, our Epistle is absent from the *Muratorian Fragment*, a Latin catalogue of the books of the New Testament, compiled about A.D. 180–200; and no traces of the Epistle have been cited from

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[1] Doubts, however, have been suggested as to whether James was included in the original editions of these versions—Westcott, *N. T. Canon*, p. 261; Mayor, *James*, p. xlix.

[2] Book IV, ch. 27, only extant in Latin version.

[3] Other writers of this period who are said to make use of the Epistle without, however, naming its author are Theophilus of Antioch and Hippolytus.

Hegesippus, A.D. 165–175, who has preserved for us the narratives of the martyrdom of James the brother of our Lord; or from the mass of apocryphal literature known as the *Clementines*, professing to be addressed by Clement of Rome to James of Jerusalem, but actually written towards the close of the second century.

Thus considering for the present simply the question of date, a comparison with early literature shews that James certainly existed before A.D. 200, and probably before A.D. 100. The absence of any trace of it in many early works may be due to two causes: first, it may have circulated in some churches only; secondly, its very general and practical character might prevent its being used in works devoted to theological controversy.

Early testimony to authorship. There is virtually no external evidence as to authorship, except that which is involved in the testimony as to date already given. That is to say, no early writer states, as of his own knowledge, that the Epistle was written by James. Origen, as we have seen, was acquainted with it as attributed to him; and, from his time onwards, it is commonly cited as James. On the other hand, Origen seems to have doubted whether it was actually written by the Apostle; and Eusebius[1] mentions that it was not universally accepted. The simplest explanation of these facts is that the Epistle was in circulation at the end of the second century; that there was no information as to its authorship, other than the name 'James' in the opening verse; that on this account, and because there were large districts of Christendom in which it had hitherto been unknown, many of the churches hesitated for a while to accept it. Practically, therefore, we are left to examine the internal evidence for and against authorship by James without either confirmation or disproof from external testimony.

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[1] See p. 5.

Internal evidence. In the opening verse the Epistle claims to have been written by 'James,' i.e. in all probability, the brother of our Lord. This claim must not be lightly set aside. The very fact that the Epistle affords no other obvious express testimony to such authorship is against the supposition that it was written by some one other than James who wished it to be accepted as conveying the teaching of the Apostle. He would naturally have introduced other clear references to the teacher in whose name he was writing.

The general character of the Epistle is in accordance with what we know of James. It is chiefly taken up with morality; James represented what may be called the Jewish element in Christianity, and might well be anxious to preserve for the new faith the high ethical ideal of Judaism. The characteristic Pauline doctrines are absent, and the Epistle seems to correct an exaggerated form of that doctrine. James was the head of the Judaizing party; he was not, like some of his followers, in open opposition to the Apostle of the Gentiles; but his standpoint and his favourite truths would naturally be different from Paul's. The slight reference to Jesus and the absence of any transcendental doctrine of the Person of Christ are quite in keeping with James who was the brother of Jesus, and apparently did not believe in him till after his death. Moreover, there are numerous parallels to passages in the Sermon on the Mount. Although James was not a disciple of our Lord, he must have been familiar with his favourite sayings, and might be expected to remember and reproduce them[1].

The reader may perhaps be disappointed that the internal evidence for the composition of this Epistle by James is not so overwhelmingly conclusive as that for the composition of Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians by Paul. But this fact affords no presumption against authorship by the Apostle. In the case of the Pauline Epistles we have a group of documents which confirm one another; our present Epistle stands alone. We have also, in the Acts of the Apostles, an historical narrative of the period to which the four Epistles belong, and they are largely taken up with the peculiar circumstances of the times. Hence the comparison of the letters with the Acts and with one another is decisive as to their authorship. If our Epistle were one of a group attributed to James, if this group dealt with the burning questions of the day, and could be compared with a history of the period, the internal evidence would be equally decisive. Numerous objections to the ascription to the brother of the Lord have been derived from the contents of the Epistle. We have already had occasion to notice some of these, viz. the alleged use of other books of the New Testament; the slight reference to Christ, to the doctrines about him, and to the teaching of Paul; and, on the other hand, the apparent antagonism to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith[1]. None of these objections seem serious. A somewhat similar argument calls attention to the absence of any reference to striking personalities like Paul and Peter, to the great missionary enterprises of the early church, to the controversies as to faith and practice, or to the wonderful development of religious thought and life. It has been held to be strange that one of the leaders of the Christian society, at the very centre of the movement, should write such a letter. But the Epistle may have been written before these developments had made much progress, or, in any case, it is easy to imagine that the special occasion for the letter, the needs of those addressed, made the Epistle what it is. This difficulty, the lack of any reflection of the circumstances of a period, remains to whatever date the book is assigned. Again, it has been said that the corruption of the church implied in some passages points to a late date; but 1 and 2 Corinthians shew that some churches included a corrupt element from the very beginning. Then, too, we gather from Acts and the Pauline writings that James held that the Mosaic law was still binding on Jewish Christians, yet the letter makes no reference to this obligation. Probably James and his readers were so much at one on this matter that no mention of it was necessary, and James may have accepted and endorsed the obligation without being in the least anxious to make it prominent in his teaching. It is further objected that, though James was a Jew, a working-man of a small town in Galilee, the Epistle is written in good Greek, the quotations from the Old Testament mostly follow the LXX, and use is made of the Apocrypha[1]. But we have no evidence as to how much a Galilæan Jew may have known of Greek or the LXX; or, again, as to how far the author may have been assisted by some one familiar with both.

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[1] Cf. p. 15.

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[1] Cf. p. 14, and notes on ii. 14–26.

Thus neither external nor internal evidence affords anything like conclusive proof that James did not write the Epistle. On the whole, the Epistle is such as he might have been expected to write; and we are warranted in admitting the claim made by i. 1, that the book is the work of 'James,' and in identifying the author with James the Just, the brother of the Lord, and the head of the Church of Jerusalem.

Date. James being the author, the composition of the Epistle necessarily falls in the first century A.D. The absence of reference to most of the ideas, controversies, events, and circumstances of the period of Paul's missionary activity suggests a date before that period, i.e. about A.D. 45. But if silence on such topics is due to the special occasion of the letter, it may have been written at any point in the Apostle's career. A date A.D. 60–70 would suit the parallels to other New Testament literature, and the apparent reference in i. 1 to Christian churches amongst the Jews of the Dispersion. Such churches can hardly have existed in A.D. 45.

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[1] Cf. notes on I. 5, 19.

Current views. We cannot claim anything like a general consensus of opinion for the view adopted here; there are distinguished scholars who deny authorship by James. It has been held, for instance, that the book is a Jewish work adapted for Christian use by an editor[1]. Harnack, in his monumental work on early Christian literature—often referred to in somewhat misleading fashion, as indicating a strong reaction to traditional views—regards our book as made up of passages from sermons which were composed about A.D. 120-140; he dates the compilation about A.D. 170, and ascribes it to some James of that period[2].

Nevertheless a majority of scholars of different schools of criticism agree in assigning the Epistle to James; so that Prof. J. B. Mayor has ventured to make the somewhat sweeping statement, 'We may say it is now generally recognized as being the earliest portion of the New Testament[3].' Prof. Mayor himself in his *Commentary*, and in the article on the Epistle in Dr. Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, strongly maintains that James wrote the Epistle 'in the fifth decade of the Christian era'; and Prof. Vernon Bartlet argues for a similar view in his *Apostolic Age*; Prof. Adeney also inclines to the same opinion[4]. On the other hand, Prof. Salmon, in his *New Testament Introduction*, holds that James wrote the Epistle late in life, after the Judaistic controversy had subsided.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. It has been frequently pointed out that the natural phenomena alluded to are those of

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[1] Spitta, ap. Adeney, *Bibl. Int.*

[2] See Chronological Table in Harnack.

[3] *Comm.* p. cxxiv.

[4] *Bibl. Introd.*

Palestine, e.g. the neighbourhood of the sea; the cultivation of figs, olives, and grapes; salt and bitter springs; earlier and later rain[1]. Otherwise there are no clear indications of the exact place where the Epistle was written; but James is always spoken of as living at Jerusalem, and we may safely conclude that he wrote from that city.

To whom addressed? The phrase of the opening verse, 'to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion,' suggests that the Epistle is a circular letter addressed to Jewish Christians of the 'Dispersion,' i.e. the various Jewish communities scattered throughout the world. This view must be correct if the Epistle was written about A.D. 45. Those who prefer a date in the second century understand 'the twelve tribes of the Dispersion' as a figurative description of the scattered Gentile Christian churches, like Paul's 'Israel of God[2].' This view might perhaps be held if James wrote the Epistle late in life.

Occasion. The contents suggest that the Apostle was moved to write this letter by what he had learnt of some particular church or churches, but there is nothing to throw light on the locality or special circumstances of these churches. The sins and sufferings dealt with are mostly those of churches generally in all periods; and persecution was widespread. The Epistle may be a summary of sermons addressed by the Apostle to Christians at Jerusalem, and inspired by their shortcomings. He knew that the same faults prevailed elsewhere, and therefore sought to extend the influence of his teaching by means of this letter.

LIFE OF JAMES, THE BROTHER OF THE LORD.

The reader may transfer what is commonly said as to the general circumstances of the early life of Jesus to his brother James. The Apostle was one of the large family—five brothers and several sisters[1]—of a carpenter in a small country town. The father, Joseph, died before the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, so that our Lord became the head of the family, and perhaps for a time the chief support, by his work as a carpenter, of his mother and brothers and sisters. James grew up under the gracious influence of Jesus, with the perfect example of his elder brother continually before his eyes. When he was old enough he, too, would take his share of carpentering. He may have been the confidant of the hopes and plans of Jesus as to his future mission. At any rate, after the beginning of his ministry he sometimes heard him speak, and must often have heard reports of his words and deeds. But 'a prophet has no honour amongst his own kinsfolk,' and it is written of the brethren of Jesus, 'Even his brethren did not believe on him[2].' On two occasions their attitude towards him was hostile or suspicious[3]; and our Lord openly declared that his disciples were to him 'brother and sister and mother.' Probably what is said of the brethren generally applied to James in particular. Apparently he was married[4]; it was the general custom among the Jews for men to marry at an early age.

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[1] See i. 6, iii. 4, 11, 12, v. 7: cf. Alford's Greek Test. iv. 101.
[2] Gal. vi. 16: cf. on Jas. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1.

Paul tells us that our Lord, after his Resurrection, appeared to 'James[5],' i.e. as elsewhere in the Pauline Epistles, the brother of the Lord. Doubtless, as in the case of Paul himself, this appearance was the occasion of the Apostle's conversion, for which, however, the way had been prepared by his previous knowledge of Jesus, and especially by the Passion.

He would be included amongst the brethren of Jesus when they associated themselves with his disciples after the Resurrection[1]. He was specially pre-eminent amongst his brethren, either as the eldest or the ablest, or both; none of the rest are mentioned by name in the Acts or Epistles[2]. As the representative of the brethren of Jesus, he naturally attained a position of authority in the church at Jerusalem. Thus, when Peter escaped from prison, it was to James, in particular, that he sent the news of his liberation[3]. After the discussion of the church at Jerusalem on the terms on which Gentiles were to be received into the church, James suggested and formulated their decision[4]. On Paul's last recorded visit to Jerusalem we are told that 'he went in unto James[5].' Similarly Paul mentions James with Cephas (Peter) and John as 'pillars' of the church[6].

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[1] Matt. xiii. 55, 56; note the 'all' referring to the sisters.

[2] John vii. 5.

[3] Mark iii. 21, 31–35; John vii. 1–9.

[4] 1 Cor. ix. 5.

[5] 1 Cor. xv. 7.

James was the head of the Judaizing Christians, i.e. the Jews who had embraced Christianity, but still lived as strict Jews, and were anxious to include in the new religion as large an element as possible of Pharisaic Judaism; Peter and John seem, for the most part, to have acted with him. Such a position naturally involved some appearance of antagonism to Paul, who was the champion of the freedom of the Gentile Christians from the yoke of the law. From the outset, and throughout his career, Paul's work was interfered with, and the peace of the Gentile churches disturbed, by fanatic Jewish Christians who claimed to represent James and his colleagues at Jerusalem. As so often happens, the inspired leaders were moderate, rational, and tolerant; but their followers exaggerated their personal and doctrinal differences. Whenever James and Paul met, they easily discovered a *modus vivendi*. It was largely through the influence of the former that the assembly at Jerusalem decided that Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised or to keep the Mosaic law[1]. Paul tells us, probably in reference to the same occasion, that 'James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; only they would that we should remember the poor[2].' Similarly, when Paul paid his last visit to Jerusalem, he was cordially welcomed by James. The head of the church at Jerusalem remained loyal to the decision which had released Gentile Christians from obedience to the law; but he was anxious, on the other hand, that Paul should clear himself from the charge of conducting a propaganda against the observance of the law by Jewish Christians. Accordingly Paul associated himself with some members of the church at Jerusalem in conspicuous public performance of the legal ritual connected with certain vows. Unfortunately this publicity led to Paul's arrest and imprisonment; but the proceedings illustrate the good understanding between the apostles and their spirit of mutual concession[3]. There is no later reference to James in the New Testament. Our data suggest that the Apostle was not so much engaged in active missionary work as in guiding and controlling the church at Jerusalem. His chief difficulties were the relations of the church to Jews on the one hand, and to Gentile converts on the other; and his success in establishing the principle that the church should comprehend both parties is a proof alike of his liberality, tact, and authority.

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[1] Acts i. 14.

[2] Except, probably, Jude, in his own Epistle.

[3] Acts xii. 17. [4] Acts xv. [5] Acts xxi. 18. [6] Gal. ii. 9–14.

The deep impression made by James upon both Jews and Christians is shewn by the numerous references to him in the Christian Apocrypha and other documents of the first three centuries. Most of the statements about him are apparently legendary. Some of these are preserved by Eusebius[4] in the second book of his *Ecclesiastical*

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[1] Acts xv.
[2] Galatians ii. 9, 10.
[3] Acts xxi. 17-26.
[4] Cp. p. 5.

History, chapters i and xxiii. He tells us that James was surnamed 'the Just' on account of his high character, and was the first bishop of Jerusalem. He quotes Clement of Alexandria[1] as stating that 'Peter, James, and John . . . . chose James the Just as bishop'; and that 'The Lord imparted the gift of knowledge to James the Just, to John, and Peter after his resurrection; these delivered it to the rest of the apostles, and they to the seventy.'

Eusebius himself states that James the Just was thrown from a wing of the Temple, and beaten to death with a fuller's club[2]. But in another place[3] he reproduces a long account of James and his martyrdom by a distinguished Christian teacher of the second century[4]. Herein it is stated that 'This apostle was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and never used a bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary[5]. He never wore woollen, but linen garments. He used to enter the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, interceding for the forgiveness of the people, so that his knees became as hard as camels' through his habitual supplication and kneeling before God.' The account goes on to state that the Jews became alarmed at James' success in persuading the people that Jesus was the Messiah, and placed the Apostle on a pinnacle of the Temple that he might publicly deny the Messiahship of Jesus. But he declared that Jesus was 'sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of a great power, and was about to come on the clouds of heaven.' Whereupon they cast him down, and began to stone him; and he knelt down and prayed, saying, 'I entreat thee, O Lord God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Finally a fuller beat out his brains with the club that he used to beat out clothes. Eusebius goes on to say: 'Indeed so admirable a man was James, and so celebrated amongst all for his justice, that even the wiser part of the Jews held that this [his death] was the cause of the subsequent siege of Jerusalem, which happened to them for no other reason than the crime against him.' He further quotes Josephus, the great Jewish historian at the close of the first century, as expressing this opinion; and adds a passage from his work on the *Antiquities of the Jews*[1], in which he states that the Apostle was stoned by the Jews.

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[1] Cf. p. 39.

[2] Bk. II. ch. i.

[3] Bk. II. ch. xxiii.

[4] Hegesippus.

[5] *τὰ ἅγια*, usually the Holy of Holies, sometimes the Temple.

The *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, an apocryphal work of the close of the first or the beginning of the second century, tells us[2] that James, after partaking of the Last Supper with Christ, made a vow that he would not again taste food till he had seen him risen from the dead; and that Christ appeared to him as the Risen One, and said, 'Now eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from the dead.'

Two apocryphal works were written in the name of James: first, *The History of James concerning the birth of Mary*, commonly called *The Protevangelium of James*, containing a narrative from the birth of Mary to the massacre of the innocents, a work of the second century; and, secondly, the *Liturgy of St. James*, in use in the Palestinian churches at least as early as the fourth century[3].

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[1] *Antiq.* XX. ix. 1, sometimes held to be a Christian interpolation.

[2] In a fragment preserved in Jerome, *de Virginibus*, I. ii; cf. Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, i. 353 ff., Eng. trans.

[3] For *Canonicity* see p. 5.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

i. 1. Salutation.

2–18. On trial and temptation.

(*a*) Cheerful endurance disciplines character (2–4).

(*b*) Wisdom freely given by God in answer to believing prayer (5–8).

(*c*) The transience of earthly life a ground of cheerful endurance (9–11).

(*d*) Temptation springs from sinful inclinations, and may be conquered by loyal faith (12–18).

19–27. Practical religious life does not consist in listening to sermons and making a profession of Christian faith, but in consistent conduct, especially in the use of the tongue.

ii. 1–13. Undue deference to 'the man with a gold ring' at 'the synagogue' and humiliation of the poor man are a foolish and flagrant violation of the law of Christ; they set the sinner at variance with the law as a whole, and will be followed by condign punishment.

14–26. Faith useless without works. Justification by works and faith illustrated by Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, and by Rahab's hospitality to the spies.

iii. 1–12. The tongue the occasion and instrument of sin, especially in the personal jealousies, party quarrels, and theological controversies of Christian teachers.

13–18. Dissensions within the church inspired by a 'devilish wisdom'; 'the wisdom from above' makes for peace and mutual consideration.

iv. 1–10. Such quarrels spring from worldly greed and ambition; they alienate men from God, and should lead to bitter remorse.

11, 12. Eagerness to sit in judgement on the brethren shews contempt for God and His law.

13–17. Confident absorption in the pursuit of material profit is a sinful ignoring of man's constant dependence on Divine Providence.

v. 1–6. Denunciation of the avarice and debauchery of the rich.

7–11. The duty and certain reward of patient endurance illustrated by the cases of husbandmen, the prophets, and Job.

12. Swearing to be avoided.

13–18. The efficacy of prayer for physical and spiritual disease; its power illustrated by the case of Elijah and the famine.

19, 20. The blessedness of winning back a brother who has wandered from the truth.

This Epistle makes a startling revelation of the depth to which a Christian church could sink even in the age of primitive faith. It furnishes a companion picture to those in 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation, and especially 1 Corinthians. As at Corinth in Paul's time, the churches addressed by James were torn with envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, largely arising out of an ambitious desire to teach. Hence the Apostle's great passage on the tongue.

The Apostle applies to this situation the principles, and sometimes the actual precepts, of the Sermon on the Mount, e.g. as to consistent and beneficent life, swearing, and the sin of censoriousness.

He denounces 'respect of persons' and the oppression of the poor by the rich quite as if he were an ancient Hebrew prophet; and enforces his teaching by examples from the history of Israel, Abraham and Isaac, Rahab, Job, Elijah.

The apparent contradiction of Pauline teaching in the section on faith and works, ii. 14–26, has excited much controversy. Properly understood it supplements and completes the doctrine of justification by faith.

The verses (v. 14, 15) about anointing the sick with oil have often been appealed to in support of faith-healing on the one hand, and as an authority for the Romanist sacrament of extreme unction on the other. Similarly the Romanist sacrament of confession is supposed to be supported by v. 16. But, according to the view taken in the exposition of v. 14–16, these verses do not really support either faith-healing or the sacraments.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF

PETER

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

'THE first Epistle General of Peter,' as it is styled in the English Versions, is written in the name of 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,' who speaks of himself as 'a fellow-elder' with the elders of the churches to which he writes, 'and a witness of the sufferings of Christ[1].'

Parallels with the rest of the New Testament. This Epistle contains numerous parallels with the other Epistles, &c. Illustrations of those with James have already been given[2]. Certain characteristics are common to 1 Peter and the Johannine literature; e.g. the priesthood of believers[3]; Christ the Lamb of God[4]; and the use of 'Babylon' as a symbolic name for Rome[5]. There are many similar parallels between 1 Peter and Hebrews, e.g.:

'Christ also suffered for sins once.' 1 Pet. iii. 18.

'Who . . . bare our sins.' 1 Pet. ii. 24.

'Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many.' Heb. ix. 28. And again—

'To the elect who are sojourners.' 1 Pet. i. 1.

'I beseech you as aliens and sojourners.' 1 Pet. ii. 11.

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[1] Chap. i. 1, v. 1.

[2] Cf. p. 14f.

[3] 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6; not elsewhere in the New Testament.

[4] *ἀμνός*, John i. 29, 36; 1 Pet. i. 19: *ἀρνίον*, Rev. v. 6 and passim. *ἀμνός* is also used of Christ in Acts viii. 32 in a quotation from Isa. liii. 7.

[5] 1 Pet. v. 13; Rev. xiv. 8, &c.; cf. note on former passage.

'These . . . confessed that they were strangers and sojourners[1] on the earth.' Heb. xi. 13.

The most numerous and striking parallels, however, are those with the Pauline Epistles; 1 Peter is saturated with the phraseology and ideas of Paul. Romans furnishes several examples; note for instance the following, all taken from the single section Rom. xii. 1—xiii. 14:—

'Not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts.' 1 Pet. i. 14.

'Be not fashioned according to[2] this world.' Rom. xii 2.

'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently.' 1 Pet. i. 22.

'Being fervent in your love amongst yourselves.' 1 Pet. iv. 8.

'Let love be unfeigned[3]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another.' Rom. xii. 10.

'Putting away therefore all wickedness,' &c. 1 Pet. ii. 1.

'Let us therefore put away the works of darkness.' Rom. xiii. 12.

'Long for the reasonable milk.' 1 Pet. ii. 2.

'A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' 1 Pet. ii. 5.

'I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God, which is your reasonable[4] service.' Rom. xii. 1.

'Be ye all likeminded, sympathetic, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing.' 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

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[1] The word for 'sojourners,' *παρεπίδημοι*, does not occur in the N. T. except in these passages.

[2] The word for 'fashion according to,' *συσχηματίζειν*, does not occur in the N. T. except in these two passages.

[3] 'Unfeigned,' *ἀνυπόκριτος*: only 2 Cor. vi. 6; 1 Tim. i. 5; 2 Tim. i. 5; Jas. iii. 17 elsewhere in the N. T. 'Fervent,' Rom. xii. 11, is *ζέοντες*; 'fervently,' 1 Pet. i. 22, is *ἐκτενῶς*.

[4] 'Reasonable,' *λογικός*, in these two passages only in the N. T.

'Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. Be ye of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. (Be ye) rendering to no man evil for evil.' Rom. xii. 14–17.

'According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, (speaking) as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, (ministering) as of the strength which God supplieth.' 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

'And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, (let us prophesy) according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, (let us give ourselves) to our ministry.' Rom. xii. 6, 7.

There are also parallels between our Epistle and other portions of Romans. The following are examples of parallels with Galatians:—

'An inheritance . . . reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.' 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

'But before faith came, we were guarded under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed.' Gal. iii. 23.

'As free, and not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants[1] of God. . . . Love the brotherhood.' 1 Pet. ii. 16, 17.

'For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only (use) not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants[2] one to the other.' Gal. v. 13.

There are further parallels with Ephesians, e.g.:—

'Christ, who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested . . . for your sake.' 1 Pet. i. 20.

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[1] δοῦλοι, slaves.

[2] δουλεύετε.

'Christ, even as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world . . . having foreordained us.' Eph. i. 4, 5.

'Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.' 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22.

'Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and he put all things in subjection under his feet.' Eph. i. 21, 22.

'Christ also suffered for sins once . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19.

'Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth.' Eph. iv. 9.

Of the Pastoral Epistles, the more striking parallels are with 1 Timothy and Titus, e. g. :—

'But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may shew forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' 1 Pet. ii. 9.

'Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.' Titus iii. 14.

The parallels with the other Pauline Epistles are less striking.

In considering these parallels, allowance must be made for ideas and phraseology, hymns, prayers, confessions of faith, and other liturgical matter, which were the common property of the primitive church; and would introduce a degree of similarity into the writings of different authors. But much of the thought and language of 1 Peter belongs to what was characteristic of the teaching of Paul and his followers as distinct from that of the Palestinian or Jewish Christian churches. The parallels, in any case, shew a dependence upon Pauline teaching. But we may go further. There is great variety of opinion as to the precise character and extent of the dependence of 1 Peter on the writings of Paul. It has even been suggested that it is just possible that Paul himself was the author of 1 Peter[1], the passages in which Peter's name occurs being later insertions; and, again, that our Epistle and Ephesians were the work of the same author[2]. But that dependence, especially on Romans, is very widely recognized[3].

The Second Epistle of Peter contains a definite and certain reference to 1 Peter: 'This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you[4].' It is most unlikely that the reference can be to some 'first epistle' other than that now extant. Moreover, the author of 2 Peter was acquainted with this Epistle[5].

There are parallels with James, see on Jas. i. 2, 10–12; and Prof. Mayor maintains that Peter made use of that Epistle. There are also parallels with the Synoptic Gospels, especially with Luke; e.g.:—

'Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' 1 Pet. v. 8.

'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat.' Luke xxii. 31.

Such parallels, however, have little bearing on the question of authorship; they may be either personal reminiscences of the Apostle, or due to the use of the Synoptic Gospels by a late author.

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[1] Harnack, *Chronologie*. [2] Seufert, cf. Salmon, p. 469.

[3] There are a few exceptions: Weiss thinks that Paul made use of 1 Peter; but, in view of Paul's original and fertile mind, and of emphatic declarations that he was not indebted for his teaching to the older apostles, this view is very improbable.

[4] 2 Pet. iii. 1. [5] Cf. on 2 Peter.

There are further parallels with Acts, e.g. (from Peter's speeches):—

'If ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.' 1 Pet. i. 17.

'Peter .... said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.' Acts x. 34, 35.

Another parallel is from Paul's speech to the elders of Ephesus:—

'Feed the flock of God which is among you.' 1 Pet. v. 2.

'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.' Acts xx. 28.

There are also parallels from the other portions of Acts, e.g.:—

'These things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven.' 1 Pet. i. 12.

'There came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.' Acts ii. 2-4.

Here again it is not certain whether we have personal reminiscences or a literary use of Acts.

To sum up this branch of the evidence; the use of the Pauline Epistles indicates a date after their composition; the reference to our Epistle in 2 Peter shews that 1 Peter was widely known as the work of the Apostle, at any rate in the first half of the second century[1]. On the whole, the literary relations of 1 Peter to the rest of the New Testament are consistent with the view that the Epistle was composed in the later Pauline, or immediate post-Pauline period, i.e. about A. D. 60-80.

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[1] See on 2 Peter.

Apostolic Fathers[1]. There are numerous more or less striking parallels between 1 Peter and the Apostolic Fathers. According to Eusebius[2], Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, about the middle of the second century, made use of our Epistle. In the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a church manual often dated about A. D. 100, we find:—

'Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts.' Chap. i. 4. Compare—

'I beseech you . . . to abstain from fleshly lusts.' 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Many other parallels with Hermas, Clement of Rome[3], &c., are like those already illustrated in connexion with James[4], and do not materially help us to determine the date of the Epistle. But Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, in his *Epistle to the Philippians* written just before his martyrdom in A.D. 155, clearly makes use of 1 Peter[5], e.g.:—

'Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' 1 Pet. i. 8.

'Which things angels desire to look into.' 1 Pet. i. 12.

'On whom, not having seen (him), ye believe with joy unspeakable and full of glory, which many desire to enter into.' Polycarp, i. 3.

'Wherefore girding up the loins of your minds.' 1 Pet. i. 13.

'Believers in God, which raised him from the dead, and gave him glory.' 1 Pet. i. 21.

'Wherefore girding up your loins, serve God in fear and truth . . . believing on him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave him glory and a throne at his right hand.' Polycarp, ii. 1.

Later literature. The various Christian documents of the close of the second and the beginning of the third century shew clearly that the Epistle was universally known and accepted as the Apostle's after about A.D. 200. It is contained in the Old Latin and Syriac versions; it is expressly quoted as Peter's by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Eusebius preserves a statement of Origen to the effect that Peter left one Epistle which was fully acknowledged; and Eusebius himself places 1 Peter amongst those books of the New Testament which were universally accepted[1]. From his time, c. A.D. 320 onwards, the Petrine authorship remained unchallenged until the modern revival of the critical study of the Bible[2].

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[1] Cf. p. 16.

[2] *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 39; cf. p. 5.

[3] Cf. p. 16.

[4] See pp. 16f.

[5] Doubts have been cast on the genuineness of this letter of Polycarp, but it is now generally accepted.

On the other hand, there is no mention of this Epistle in the Muratorian Canon[3]; there is, however, nothing in that document which implies that the Epistle was known to the author and rejected; moreover, the Canon, as it has reached us, is incomplete in parts; and in its original form it may have mentioned 1 Peter.

Thus, as far as external evidence is concerned, the early witnesses shew that our Epistle was in existence in the first half of the second century, and that it was universally accepted as Peter's at the close of that century, unless indeed it was unknown to certain Italian churches represented by the Muratorian Canon. This branch of the evidence therefore is strongly in favour of the Petrine authorship.

Internal evidence. As regards internal evidence, we have already shewn[4] that the Epistle has some points of contact with the Synoptic Gospels and the speeches of Peter, such as we should look for in an Epistle written by that Apostle. But neither in these respects nor generally is the Epistle so characteristically Petrine as to afford conclusive proof that Peter was its author. On the other hand, certain objections to the Petrine authorship have been based on the contents of the Epistle. Some of these are trivial. It is urged that the Apostle could not have written such good Greek; but we have no exact information as to how far Greek was spoken amongst the Jews of Galilee, or as to the linguistic attainments of Peter, or as to what use he may have made of secretarial assistance[1]. Peter at Babylon[2], it is said, was not likely to have been familiarly acquainted with either Paul's writings or his teaching; but, probably, here, as in the Revelation, Babylon means Rome. Again, it is pointed out that the quotations in this Epistle mostly follow the LXX, and some critics suppose that Peter, as a Palestinian Jew, would have translated for himself from the Hebrew; but the LXX was the one Greek Bible of the times, and it was as natural for a Jew writing in Greek to take his quotations from the LXX, as it is for any one writing to-day in English to use the Authorized or Revised Version. Even Paul usually follows the LXX, except where he finds it necessary to correct its renderings, and Peter had not the scholarly training and attainments of the pupil of Gamaliel. Again, our Epistle is addressed to the churches of Asia Minor, among the rest to those of Galatia and Asia. Paul had founded the churches in both these provinces, for Asia included Ephesus and Miletus; and we have his letters to the Galatians and Ephesians. Yet 1 Peter makes no reference to the Apostle of the Gentiles. Perhaps Peter wrote specially to Jewish Christians whose churches may have been organized apart from the followers of Paul; or there might easily be other special circumstances to account for silence on this subject. Similar considerations may explain the absence of personal reminiscences of the sayings and doings of our Lord.

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[1] For these authorities cf. pp. 18f., also Clement of Alexandria, bishop of that city, c. A.D. 200, and Tertullian, North African divine, c. A.D. 220.

[2] With insignificant exceptions. [3] See p. 18. [4] See pp. 36f.

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[1] Cf. on James, p. 22.

[2] 1 Pet. v. 13.

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There are, however, two serious difficulties in the way of accepting the Petrine authorship—first, certain features which are said to point to a late date, and the large use of the Pauline Epistles.

First, the alleged indications of a late date. The use of the Pauline Epistles implies that 1 Peter must have been written after A.D. 62. The same conclusion seems to follow from v. 13, where the author of the Epistle sends his readers a greeting from Mark. According to Col. iv. 12, Mark[1] was at Rome with Paul during his first imprisonment; and according to 2 Tim. iv. 13, Paul wished Mark to join him at Rome during the same, or it may be a later, imprisonment. If, as seems most probable, 'Babylon' stands for Rome, the author of 1 Peter was in Rome with Mark. As he makes no mention of Paul, the letter must have been written after his death, or, at any rate, after he was released from his first imprisonment. Again, it would be more easy to understand how any one came to write to the churches of Asia Minor without mentioning Paul, if that apostle had been dead for some years. Another special point is raised by Prof. Ramsay. The Epistle speaks of its readers 'being reproached for the name of Christ' and suffering as Christians[2]. The motive of the first persecutions was hatred of Christianity, but the pretext was put forward that the persecuted were disturbers of the public peace; to be a Christian was not in itself a crime in the eye of the law. Nero, for instance, tortured and burnt the Christians because he charged them with having set fire to Rome. But, according to Prof. Ramsay, Christianity in itself cannot have been regarded as a crime earlier than the reign of the emperor Domitian[3], i.e. not before A.D. 80. As Peter was a contemporary of our Lord, and a married man when he began his ministry, the Apostle would be about 70 in A.D. 66[1], and about 84 in A.D. 80. Prof. Ramsay, indeed, ascribes the Epistle to Peter, in spite of the difficulties raised by his own theory. He maintains that about A.D. 80 the Apostle was still alive and capable of writing this vigorous and suggestive work. Such a view is improbable on the face of it, and sets aside the weighty traditional evidence which points to A.D. 66 as the approximate date of Peter's death[2]. But Prof. Ramsay's criterion is not decisive; whatever pretexts for persecution were put forward, both Christians and persecutors were aware of the distinction between martyrs whose only crime was their religion, and malefactors who had broken the ordinary laws. Hence, while the indications of date fix the Epistle as near to A.D. 66 as possible, they are consistent with authorship by Peter about A.D. 64-66.

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[1] It is barely possible, but extremely improbable, that 'Mark' in 1 Peter refers to some one other than 'Mark' in Colossians and 2 Timothy.

[2] 1 Pet. iv. 14–16.

[3] A.D. 81–96. *Church in the Rom. Emp.* pp. 262 f.

The second main objection is the large dependence of the Epistle on the Pauline writings. Can we believe that the chief of the Apostles of the Circumcision, the teacher regarded by Paul's opponents as their leader, the Cephas of whom Paul wrote, in an Epistle used by the author of 1 Peter, 'I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned[3]'—can we believe that *he* would write as if he were a disciple of the Apostle of the Gentiles? At first sight the difficulty seems insuperable; yet it may fairly be maintained that after a careful consideration of Peter's character and history this objection ceases to be serious. The Apostle was impulsive and generous, too impulsive to harden into the slave of any stereotyped set of dogmatic phrases, too generous to ignore the power and truth of the Pauline teaching, or to resist its influence, either on account of an ancient grudge, or because of sectarian bitterness towards a teacher of another school, or through jealousy of a rival apostle. He was ever disposed to surrender unconditionally to the last pressure brought to bear on him; witness the Denial, his relations with Cornelius, and the incidents at Antioch. At one moment, under Paul's influence, he mixed freely with Gentile Christians; the next he was captured by 'certain from James,' and reverted to Judaistic exclusiveness. There seems nothing improbable in the explanation that years later he met with Paul at Rome, shared with him the dangers of his closing years, and was once more mastered by the influence to which he had yielded for a time at Antioch.

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[1] Cf. p. 46. [2] Cf. p. 51. [3] Gal. ii. 11.

Conclusion. Thus these objections do not seem fatal to the traditional view, and we may follow the opening verse, and the opinion known to have been held by the church since about A.D. 150, in accepting the Petrine authorship. The date will be about A.D. 64-66.

Current views. Writing in 1886, when our Epistle had long been subjected to careful examination in the full light of modern criticism, a distinguished opponent of the Petrine authorship admitted that the traditional view was still accepted by a great majority of scholars[1]. Its defenders have included Schleiermacher, Neander, Meyer, De Wette, Ewald, and in more recent times Weiss and Salmon, and within the last two or three years Professors Ramsay, Adeney (with some hesitation), Vernon Bartlet, and Zahn. Most of those who accept the Petrine authorship date the Epistle between A.D. 60 and 65; Weiss, however, about A.D. 54; and Ramsay, about A.D. 80.

The minority who reject the Petrine authorship are numerous and distinguished, including such names as Samuel Davidson, Hausrath, Pfleiderer, and Harnack. They assign the Epistle to various dates between A.D. 81 and 140. According to Harnack, it was probably written under Domitian, on account of the persecutions under that emperor, A.D. 81–96, but perhaps ten or twenty years earlier, and possibly by Paul, Peter's name having been introduced afterwards by mistake[1]. A date about A.D. 117 has been suggested on account of the persecutions under the emperor Hadrian, A.D. 117–138, referred to in the correspondence between him and Pliny, his governor in Bithynia. It has been suggested, very improbably, that Silvanus was the author; see on v. 12.

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[1] H. J. Holtzmann, *Einleitung* (*N. T. Introduction*), p. 520.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. The line of argument and the evidence, traditional and otherwise, which suggest that 1 Peter was written about A.D. 60–65, would also indicate Rome as the place where it was composed. For, according to a widespread tradition, the Apostle was at Rome during this period. Moreover, v. 13 apparently refers to Rome as the place of composition under the mystic name 'Babylon.'

If, however, Babylon is taken literally it may mean either Babylon on the Euphrates, or a place of the same name in Egypt, near Cairo. There are objections to either view. According to Josephus, the Jewish colony at Babylon had ceased to exist before A.D. 60[2]. On the other hand, it is not likely that 'Babylon,' taken literally, would be used without qualification to denote any place other than the great city on the Euphrates. These difficulties confirm the view that we have here, as in Revelation, a mystical name for Rome.

Persons addressed. According to i. 1, the persons addressed are 'elect . . . sojourners of the Dispersion' in the north-eastern provinces of Asia Minor. This description, understood literally, would mean the Jewish Christians of that district; and we could easily understand that the Apostle of the Circumcision had occasion to address the Jewish Christians of a district in which the

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[1] *Chronologie.* [2] Under Caligula, A.D. 37–41, *Antiq.* xviii. 9.

Gentiles had been evangelized by Paul. The Christians may not have been separately organized into Jewish and Gentile churches, and yet the Jews may have remained, in many respects, a body apart. But there are no indications[1] in the Epistle of its having been addressed exclusively to Jews; indeed, there are several passages which seem to imply that it was written for Gentiles, e.g. 'which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God,' and 'for the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles[2].' Thus it is probable that the 'Dispersion' includes both Jewish and Gentile Christians; perhaps the members of some special church at Rome, Babylon, or elsewhere, in which Peter was particularly interested, and which had been scattered throughout Asia Minor by persecution; or, more probably, all the various churches of the provinces named. If A.D. 80, or any later date, is adopted, the persons addressed must have been the Christians of Asia Minor generally; the Jewish section did not survive so long as a distinct element in churches out of Syria[3].

Occasion. The occasion of the Epistle was some special outbreak of persecution, whereby the Christians of Asia Minor 'had been put to grief in manifold trials,' and were exposed to a 'fiery trial' which 'came upon' them 'to prove' them[4]. The Apostle wrote to comfort and encourage them in their distress, and to urge them to remain loyal to Christ in spite of persecution. Probably these persecutions were the sequel to that instituted by Nero at Rome. The enemies of the Christians would be encouraged by his hostility to the new faith, and the Roman officials in the provinces would seek to ingratiate themselves with the emperor by following his example.

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[1] Other than i. 1.

[2] ii. 10 (cf. Hos. i. 9), iv. 3: cf. also i. 14, 18; iii. 6.

[3] See also notes on i. 21; ii. 22.

[4] i. 6, iv. 4.

Those who reject the Petrine authorship have found the occasion of the Epistle in the persecution under Domitian, or in that under Hadrian.

LIFE OF ST. PETER.

Peter and his brother, together with the apostle Philip, belonged to Bethsaida of Galilee[1]. This may be the well-known Bethsaida Julias, on the north-east of the Sea of Galilee, and a little east of the Jordan. Strictly speaking, this was not in Galilee, but in Gaulonitis, in the tretrarchy of Herod Philip; but was sometimes spoken of loosely as in Galilee. In view of this difficulty as to the position of Bethsaida Julias, another, otherwise unknown, Bethsaida has been supposed to have existed in Galilee at the north-western end of the lake, and to have been the city of these apostles. At the beginning of our Lord's ministry Peter was married, had a house at Capernaum, and was a fisherman[2]. It was usual for young men to marry on becoming adults, so that these facts do not necessarily imply that Peter was more than twenty-five. But he has commonly been regarded as older, and though there is nothing very definite in favour of this view, it seems to be supported by the general impression made by the Gospel narratives. Amongst the Jews of those days, very young men were not readily accepted as leaders; yet Peter seems to have at once become the chief of the apostles, and, apparently as a matter of course, assumed an air of authority, even when speaking with Jesus himself. The most obvious explanation is that he was older than most of the rest, perhaps a man getting on for forty.

His early life had been passed on or near the shores of the Sea of Galilee, first at Bethsaida, then at Capernaum; there is nothing to shew when he left the one for the other. Probably his father was a fisherman, and he and his brother Andrew were brought up to that pursuit from boyhood. He had thus grown to middle age as a Galilæan Jew, no doubt a 'good Jew' in a rough and ready fashion, but not excessively scrupulous about all the minutiae of Pharisaic observances. The population round the lake was very mixed—Jews, Greeks, Syrians, Arabs, and Phœnicians, with a small leaven of Roman soldiers and officials. In catching and disposing of his fish, the future apostle would have to do with Roman customs officers, and with Syrian and Greek merchants. His boat would sometimes carry foreign travellers across the lake. In these and other ways he was in touch with the great world which lay outside the narrow limits of Judaism, and would thus be prepared to understand, accept, and promulgate a more liberal faith.

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[1] John i. 44; xii. 21.

[2] Mark i. 16–31.

He first appears in the Gospel narrative as a disciple of John the Baptist, brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew. We are not told that at this time he became a disciple of Jesus, but our Lord addressed him as 'Peter[1].' His actual discipleship dated from the time when Jesus called him and his brother Andrew, together with John and James, the sons of Zebedee, to leave their boats and nets and become fishers of men. The narrative in John explains their prompt obedience to this call. The honest fisherman's experience of business and official life had made him feel the need of reformation and a reformer for the world and for himself. Hence his ready response first to the Baptist's preaching, and then to the call of Christ. He would also be moved by the peculiar combination of authority and winsomeness in Jesus.

The new disciple was well qualified by his gifts and social position for his new vocation. In a sense he was a working man, living by manual labour and skill; and he followed a calling which made constant demands upon his courage and resource, and tended to develop self-reliance. But he and his brother owned their own boat, and lived in a house where they were able to entertain their Master and his disciples, so that they may be reckoned as belonging to the lower middle class. He had probably received some education in the contents and teaching of the Old Testament. The phrase translated 'unlearned and ignorant men[1]' would be more accurately rendered 'without theological training, and so laymen'; or, as we should say, they were not 'University men.' We might compare Peter and his brother Andrew to two devout Scotsmen, who were master and mate of a coasting-vessel of which they were part-owners.

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[1] John i. 40-42; Peter (Greek) = Κηφᾶς, (Aramaic) = Rock or Stone.

As we have already noticed, Peter took the lead amongst the disciples from the beginning and right through our Lord's ministry. He is always placed first in the lists of the apostles. He and James and John, and sometimes Andrew, formed an inner circle who remained with Jesus on special occasions when the other apostles were excluded, as for instance at the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane. Peter was constantly foremost in word and deed. It was he who tried to walk on the water; who proposed at the Transfiguration to make 'tabernacles' for Jesus and Moses and Elijah; who was the most vehement in his protestations that he would be faithful to the Master even unto death; who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant; who followed Jesus to the judgement-hall; and at the scene on the Sea of Galilee after the Resurrection left the boat and plunged into the water to come to Christ[2]. Peter almost always appears as the spokesman of the Twelve. It was he who replied to our Lord's question, 'Who do men say that I am?' by the decisive confession of faith, 'Thou art the Christ[1].' The Master himself solemnly and formally confirmed Peter in the position of chief of the apostles, when he named him 'Peter,' and declared that he was the 'rock' on which the church should be built[2]. Yet there was an unstable impulsiveness about the Apostle; he had hardly been addressed as the 'rock' when our Lord was compelled to say to him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.' Later on his vehement protestations of devotion only lent the more painful emphasis to his denial of the Master.

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[1] *ἀγράμματοι . . . καὶ ἰδιῶται*, Acts iv. 13.

[2] John xxi. 7.

Two or three years of constant intimacy with our Lord and the disciples must have had a deep and lasting effect upon an impressionable character like that of Peter. Temporary lapses like the denial are no evidence to the contrary. This time of preparation was followed by the most momentous period the world has ever seen. Into a few short weeks were crowded the awful and solemn events of the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Peter was both an eye-witness and a chief actor in these events; such experiences clinched the training of the years of the ministry, and interpreted afresh the teaching, life, and person of Christ. The inspiration and illumination of those weeks sent the Apostle forth as a missionary of the Cross, equipped with a wondrous energy, insight, and devotion. In the first preaching of the gospel at Jerusalem he was still the chief speaker; he too was the first to carry the word to the Gentiles, and to gather in their firstfruits in the conversion of Cornelius and his household. In these early days he still appears as the head of the church[3]. When Paul's work amongst the Gentiles outside Palestine raised the question as to whether such converts should conform to all the details of the Jewish law, Peter, like James, declared for the more liberal policy. 'Why tempt ye God,' said he, 'that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear[1]?' Later on he visited Paul at Antioch, and so far departed from strict Pharisaic rules as himself to eat with Gentiles; but some of the Judaizing party came to Antioch, 'certain came from James,' and under their influence he reverted to older habits—'when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision[2].' His unstable impulsiveness had survived years of training under the greatest Master that ever taught, and the most remarkable experiences that mortal man could well undergo. His vacillation broke up the good understanding between himself and Paul; and the Apostle of the Gentiles 'resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.' Here we take leave of Peter, as far as the New Testament narrative is concerned. He is not mentioned in the account of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem[3]; probably he had left the city. Both the New Testament and tradition convey the impression that the leadership of the Jewish Christians had passed from Peter to James. The latter was the stronger and more consistent of the two; he was probably of a narrower temperament and therefore more popular with the Jewish party in the church; moreover he enjoyed the prestige of being the brother of the Lord.

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[1] Mark viii. 29, &c.
[2] Matt. xvi. 18.
[3] Cf. Gal. ii. 7, 8.

There is a very large number of traditions about Peter, in which history and legend are so intertwined that they cannot be disentangled with any certainty. The Clementine literature[4] contains unhistorical legends concerning a series of contests between Peter and Simon Magus. Clement of Alexandria, writing about the same time[5], tells us that Peter's wife anticipated the modern Zenana Mission, thus: 'Peter and Philip had children, and both took about their wives, who helped them by ministering to women in their own homes [i.e. the women's]; by their means the doctrine of the Lord penetrated without scandal into the privacy of women's apartments.'

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[1] Acts xv. 10. [2] Gal. ii. 11, 12. [3] Acts xxi. 18.

[4] A collection of apocryphal writings written in the name of—but certainly not by—Clement of Rome, about A.D. 200.

[5] *Stromateis,* iii.

Tradition, however, does not throw any clear light on the questions when the Apostle left Jerusalem or where he went to. Apart from this Epistle, we last hear of him, in the New Testament, at Antioch, at variance with Paul. Probably, therefore, he did not stay long at Antioch on that occasion. He may have returned to Jerusalem, or may have at once journeyed further afield. It is a natural conjecture that, at some time or other, he visited the churches in the north-east of Asia Minor to which this Epistle is addressed; but it is nothing more than a conjecture. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, writing about A.D. 180, speaks of Peter as having taught at Corinth[1]; and some have seen allusions to such teaching in 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 22. But this tradition may have arisen from the anxiety of the Church of Corinth to identify itself with the chief of the apostles. If the term 'Babylon' in 1 Pet. v. 13 denotes either the great city on the Euphrates, or the town of that name near the modern Cairo, Peter must have exercised his ministry at one or other of these places[2].

But there is an early and widespread tradition that Rome was the scene of the last years or months of Peter's ministry, and of his martyrdom; and 'Babylon' is probably Rome. Indeed Eusebius[3] speaks of Peter as spending twenty years at Rome, and Jerome extends the period to twenty-five years; but these statements cannot be reconciled with the narrative in Acts, and must be due to some mistaken reckoning of Eusebius or his authority. But several early authorities[1] agree that Peter preached at Rome; and that, like Paul, he suffered martyrdom in the Neronian persecution. Origen[2] tells that, being condemned to be crucified, he asked to be allowed to suffer head downwards, because he was not worthy to die in the same way as his Master; and that his request was granted. A picturesque legend[3] tells us that the Christians of Rome, on the strength of our Lord's words, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another,' persuaded the Apostle to leave Rome to escape the persecution. But at the gate Christ met him; and Peter asked, 'Lord, whither goest thou?' (*Quo vadis?*) 'I go to Rome,' he replied, 'there to be crucified once more.' Peter went back into the city to await his martyrdom.

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[1] Ap. Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.* ii. 25.

[2] Cf. p. 44 and note on v. 13.

[3] *Chronicon.*

Prof. Ramsay proposes to set aside the testimony of these authorities as to Peter's death under Nero, and to prolong his life as late as A.D. 80. But this seems to be a desperate expedient to preserve the Epistle for Peter, in spite of the evidence it gives—according to Prof. Ramsay—of having been written not earlier than about A.D. 80[4]. The evidence for Peter's preaching and death at Rome is very generally accepted as conclusive. Clement of Alexandria tells us that Peter's wife also suffered martyrdom.

An early second-century tradition[5] tells us that the second Gospel is Mark's record of the preaching of Peter. The contents of the Gospel are consistent with this account of its origin, and the tradition is accepted by very many scholars. In the first four centuries there were current several apocryphal works, bearing the name of the Apostle, viz. *The Acts of Peter*, *The Gospel according to Peter*, *The Doctrine* or *Preaching of Peter*, and *The Revelation of Peter*.

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[1] Dionysius of Corinth, l. c.; Tertullian, *Scorp.* 15; Caius, c. A.D. 220; Lactantius, c. A.D. 300; Eusebius, &c.

[2] Circa A.D. 250, ap. Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.* iii. 1.

[3] Found in some editions of the works of St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, A.D. 374-397.

[4] Cf. p. 41.

[5] Papias, &c.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE.

The chief themes of the Epistle are summarized in iv. 19, 'Let them also which suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.' It is an exhortation to patient endurance, consistent Christian life, and steadfast faith and hope in time of persecution. It deals at length and in detail with the principles of Christian conduct, and it and James are to the Epistles what the Sermon on the Mount is to the Gospels. It specially insists on Christ's sufferings as an example and ground of patience and hope; and on the imminence of the second coming as a further motive for cultivating those virtues. Like John it dwells on the new birth. But it is chiefly remarkable because it is saturated with Pauline thought; and because in it two of Paul's companions, Silvanus and Mark, are mentioned as associated with Peter. Thus the Epistle implies close union and complete harmony between the two apostles.

It contains the difficult passage as to the 'preaching to the spirits in prison,' iii. 19, which, with iv. 6, is often held to refer to an offer of salvation, after death, to those who died before the Incarnation.

I. i. 1, 2. Opening Salutation.

II. i. 3–12. Thanksgiving for, and exposition of, the privileges which Christians enjoy, even in the midst of tribulations.

III. i. 13—ii. 10. General exhortation to Christian consistency, in view of the privileges mentioned in the preceding section.

IV. ii. 11—iv. 11[1]. Detailed directions as to conduct, enforced by the example of Christ and the certainty of future bliss.

(*a*) Introductory summary (ii. 11, 12).

(*b*) Obedience to authority (13–17).

(*c*) Slaves. Christ the example of patient endurance of unmerited ill-treatment (18–25).

(*d*) Wives (iii. 1–6).

(*e*) Husbands (7).

(*f*) The duty of mutual kindliness amongst believers, and of patient endurance of abuse, enforced by the authority of Scripture (8–12).

(*g*) General exhortation to a consistent life, that their suffering may be undeserved like that of Christ; that they may be able to look forward with confident hope to 'the end of all things,' which is at hand. Doxology (iii. 13—iv. 11).

V. iv. 12—v. 11[1]. Further detailed directions.

(*a*) Restatement of **IV** (*g*), (iv. 12–19).

(*b*) The duty of elders (v. 1–4).

(*c*) The duty of the younger Christians (5^a).

(*d*) The general duty of humble, watchful, and steadfast faith (5^b–9).

(*e*) Prayer and Doxology (10, 11).

VI. v. 12–14. Closing Salutations.

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[1] Opening with 'Beloved,' and closing with Doxology.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

Written in the name of the Apostle. The Second Epistle of Peter is written in the name of the Apostle; thus it begins 'Symeon (R. V. text, *Simon*) Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.' Later on we read, 'Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me [1],' probably referring to our Lord's words as to the 'manner of death' by which Peter 'should glorify God [2].' Again, 'We were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount [3]'—an obvious reference to the Transfiguration, the only witnesses of which were 'Peter and James and John [4].' Again, 'This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you [5]'—doubtless a reference to the first Epistle, which is also written in the name of Peter, and very generally accepted as the actual work of the Apostle.

The simplest explanation of these passages, if we consider them entirely apart from all other evidence, is that the Epistle was written by Peter. But at the same time we must keep in mind the alternative that they may be due to the literary method of an author other than the Apostle, who thus asserted his conviction that he was expressing the mind of Peter[1].

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[1] Ch. i. 14.
[2] John xxi. 18, 19.
[3] Ch. i. 16–18.
[4] Mark ix. 2–8.
[5] Ch. iii. 1.

Relation to 1 Peter. In investigating the authorship of 2 Peter, we naturally begin by comparing it with 1 Peter. It is important to remember that the author of 2 Peter, whether the Apostle or somebody else, was acquainted with 1 Peter[2].

We have here, therefore, two short letters, one, as we have decided, the work of Peter. We have no other extant writings of that Apostle[3]; and we wish to determine whether these two short letters are by the same or by different authors. To decide such a question conclusively by purely internal evidence is a most difficult task. It is seldom possible to prove to the satisfaction of impartial judges that two such works either were, or were not, written by the same author. An adequate attempt at the solution of the problem would involve an exhaustive examination of the ideas, style, and vocabulary of both, down to the least important minutiae; and we have not space for such a process. We must confine ourselves to a general statement of the facts, and of the way in which they are interpreted by opposing critics.

Where we have two religious works in the same language, and the author of the one was acquainted with the other, there must necessarily be resemblances between the two; and even a considerable amount of resemblance is not strong evidence that both were written by the same author. On the other hand, two works by the same author are not likely to be written in exactly the same style, or to express precisely the same ideas. Even striking differences may not prove that two works were written by different authors. We have to look at the character of the resemblances and differences.

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[1] Cf. p. 9.

[2] 2 Pet. iii. 1.

[3] There are of course abstracts of his speeches in Acts.

First as to resemblances, of which we will give a few specimens. There are some which are pretty obvious, e.g. both Epistles speak of 'Noah and seven others' escaping the Flood[1].

Certain striking words and phrases occur in both Epistles and nowhere else in the New Testament, e.g. 'virtue' used of God[2], 'to be an eyewitness[3],' and 'eyewitnesses[4],' 'without spot or blemish[5].' Such resemblances are fully explained by the fact that the author of 2 Peter was acquainted with 1 Peter; and it has been maintained that they are more consistent with the use by one writer of the work of another, than with the composition of both Epistles by the same person. There are, however, details of idiom which have been adduced in favour of the Petrine authorship, but they are too slight and few to carry any weight.

Of the very numerous differences, we can only cite two. The term 'Saviour[6]' occurs five times in 2 Peter, and not at all in 1 Peter. The two Epistles use almost entirely different sets of names and titles of our Lord. 1 Peter has 'Christ' or 'Jesus Christ[7]'; while 2 Peter usually has '(our) Lord Jesus Christ' or 'our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' and, once each, 'Jesus Christ,' 'our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,' and 'Jesus our Lord[8].' It is generally recognized that the differences of style and ideas make it very difficult to ascribe the two Epistles to the same author. Neither was this difficulty first discovered by modern critics, for Jerome tells us that, in his time, there were many who denied that the Epistle was Peter's, on account of the differences in style between it and 1 Peter[1].

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[1] 1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5.

[2] *ἀρετή*, 1 Pet. ii. 9, R. V. 'excellencies,' 2 Pet. i. 3; and also in its usual sense, 2 Pet. i. 5 and Phil. iv. 8, and nowhere else in the N. T.

[3] *ἐποπτεύειν*, R. V. 'behold,' 1 Pet. ii. 12, iii. 2.

[4] *ἐπόπται*, 2 Pet. i. 16.

[5] 1 Pet. i. 19 *ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου*, 2 Pet. iii. 14 *ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμώμητοι*: cf. 2 Pet. ii. 13, 'spots and blemishes,' *σπῖλοι καὶ μῶμοι*.

[6] *σωτήρ*.

[7] 'Jesus' in A. V. of v. 10, 14, is a misreading.

[8] 2 Pet. i. 1 (but cf. R. V. marg.), 2.

Relation to Jude. There is a very close resemblance between 2 Pet. ii. 1—iii. 3 and Jude 4–18, as will be seen from the accompanying table of the corresponding portions of the two passages. Words identical in the Greek are printed in italics; where the same Greek words are used in different forms an asterisk (*) is added; and clauses occurring in one passage only are placed in square brackets [ ]. In a few instances the Revised Version, and even English idiom, have been departed from, in order to make the resemblances and differences correspond more closely with the Greek.

JUDE.	2 PETER.
4. (*a*) For there are certain men crept in *privily*, (*d*) even they *who* were *of old* set forth unto this *sentence*, [ungodly men,]	ii. 1–3. (*a*) [But there arose also false prophets among the people], as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall *privily* bring in destructive heresies,
(*c*) turning the grace of our God into *lasciviousness*,	(*b*) *denying* even *the Master* that bought them,
(*b*) and *denying* our only *Master* and Lord, Jesus Christ.	[bringing upon themselves swift destruction.]
	(*c*) And many shall follow their *lasciviousnesses;*
	[by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:]
	(*d*) *whose sentence* now from *of old* lingereth not,
[5. Destruction of the Israelites in the Wilderness.]	[and their destruction slumbereth not.]

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[1] 'Plerisque eius esse negatur, propter styli cum priore dissonantiam.'

JUDE.	2 PETER.
6. And *angels* which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation,	4. For if God spared not *angels* when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus,
he hath *kept* in everlasting bonds under *darkness unto judgement* of the great day.	and committed them to chains[1] of *darkness*, to be *kept unto judgement.*
	[5. Noah and the Flood.]
7. (*a*) Even as *Sodom and Gomorrah*,	6. (*a*) And the *cities* of *Sodom and Gomorrah*,
[and the *cities* about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh,]	(*c*) he condemned with an overthrow, turning them into ashes,
(*b*) are set forth as an *example*,	(*b*) having made them an *example*
(*c*) suffering the punishment of eternal fire.	[unto those that should live ungodly;]
	[7–9. Deliverance of Lot &c.;]
8. Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings *defile the flesh*,	10. but chiefly them that walk after *the flesh* in the lust of *defilement*,
and set at nought *dominion*,	and despise *dominion.*
	[Daring, selfwilled,]
and *rail at dignities.*	they tremble not *to rail at dignities*:
9. But Michael the arch*angel*, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses,	11. whereas *angels*, though greater in might and power,
durst _not bring_* _against_ him _a railing judgement_*, but said, _The Lord_* rebuke thee.	_bring not a railing judgement against_* _them before the Lord._*
10. *But these*	12. *But these,*
(*b*) *rail* at whatsoever things they know not:	(*a*) *as creatures without reason,*
[and what they understand *animally*],	[born mere *animals* to be taken and destroyed,]
(*a*) *as* the *creatures without reason,*	(*b*) *rail*ing in matters whereof they are ignorant,
(*c*) *in* these things are they *destroyed.*	(*c*) shall *in* their destroying surely be *destroyed.*

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[1] So R. V. marg.; R. V. text, 'pits.'

JUDE.	2 PETER.
11. Woe unto them !	15, 16. [forsaking the right way, they *erred*,]
for they went *in the way of* [Cain,	having followed *the way of*
and ran riotously in the *error* of]	
Balaam for *hire*,	*Balaam* the son of Beor, [who loved the *hire* of wrong-doing ; but he was rebuked for his own transgression : a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet.]
[and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.]	
12, 13. *These are* they who are *spots*[1] *in* your *love-feasts when they feast with you*,	17^{a}. *These are* 13^{b}. *spots* and blemishes, revelling *in* their *love-feasts when they feast with you ;*
[shepherds that without fear feed themselves ;]	Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 3^{a}.
clouds *without water*, carried along *by* the winds ;	17. springs *without water*, and mists driven *by* a storm ;
[autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; (13) wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars,]	
for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.	*for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved.*
[14, 15. Quotation from 'Enoch.']	
16. [These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts,]—and their mouth speaketh *great swelling words*,—	18. For, uttering *great swelling words* of vanity,
[shewing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.]	[they entice in the *lusts* of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error.]
17. But ye, *beloved*,	iii. 1, 2. This is now, *beloved*,

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[1] R. V. marg. ; in R. V. text, 'hidden rocks.'

Jude.	2 Peter.
	[the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance;]
remember ye *the words which have been spoken before by the*	that ye should *remember the words which were spoken before by the*
	[holy prophets, and the commandment]
apostles of our *Lord* Jesus Christ;	*of the Lord* and Saviour through your *apostles:*
18. [how that they said to you,]	3. [knowing this first, that]
In the last time there *shall* be *mockers, walking after their* own ungodly *lusts.*	*in the last* days *mockers shall* come with mockery, *walking after* their own *lusts.*

A careful examination of this table will shew that either the author of 2 Peter had read Jude or vice versa. Even here there is some measure of difficulty in determining which is the original, the more so as the decision of this question has some bearing on the problems of the date and authorship of the two Epistles. There is always a temptation to interpret ambiguous evidence in favour of one's own theories. Thus Jude 7, 13, have been regarded as expansions of 2 Pet. ii. 6, 17, and, therefore, as evidence for the priority of 2 Peter. But, on the whole, there is more in 2 Peter that looks like expansion; and it is comparatively easy to explain many of the differences as omissions or alterations from Jude made by the author of 2 Peter[1]. In 2 Peter, verse 11 of chapter ii. is unintelligible apart from the parallel passage, Jude 9; it is not clear who are meant by 'them,' possibly the sinners of the previous verses. But if so why should 'angels' be brought in as their accusers? This verse is at once explained by a comparison with its parallel; it is an adaptation of Jude 9 to a slightly different context. The episode of Michael and Moses was taken from an apocryphal work; 2 Peter was anxious to avoid any reference to so doubtful a source of information, and so generalized the idea. Similarly 2 Peter omits the quotation from the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* given in Jude 14, 15. Again, if 2 Pet. iii. 2, 3, were the original, there is no reason why Jude 17, 18, should omit reference to the 'prophets' and the 'commandment.' But if Jude were the original some such alterations as those made in 2 Peter would be necessary. The language in Jude, 'Remember . . . the words . . . spoken . . . by the apostles . . . how that they said,' implied that the author was not an apostle; and it would be natural for Peter, or any one writing in his name, to modify the verse so as to remove this implication. 'Your apostles,' for instance, might denote a group to which Peter did not belong. An exhaustive comparison of the two Epistles leaves a decided impression that Jude is the original. It is true that a respectable array of scholars might be cited in support of the opposite view[1], but the weight of authority is in favour of the priority of Jude[2]. The author of 2 Peter may have worked from a MS. of Jude, or from his recollection of that Epistle, probably sometimes from the one and sometimes from the other.

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[1] Cf. Commentary on 2 Peter.

Relations with the rest of the New Testament. There are a few slight parallels between our Epistle and books of the New Testament other than 1 Peter and Jude; they are not, however, enough to suggest any direct literary connexion. For instance, the Greek expression for 'the reward of iniquity[3]' is only found in Acts and in this Epistle. There are also other points of contact with the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles; e. g. the terms 'godly' (adj.), 'godliness[4]' only occur in the Acts, the Pastoral

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[1] e. g. Lumby (*Speaker's Comm.*), Spitta, Zahn.

[2] e. g. Chase (Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*), Harnack, Holtzmann, Salmon, Weiss.

[3] Acts i. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 13, 15.

[4] *εὐσεβής, εὐσέβεια.*

Epistles, and 2 Peter[1]. 'Saviour' is a favourite word in this Epistle and in the Pastorals; it also occurs in Luke and Acts, very rarely elsewhere.

Relations with other early literature. It has been maintained that the author of 2 Peter was acquainted with the works of the Jewish Alexandrian philosopher Philo[2], and also with those of Josephus[3]; but in neither case does the evidence seem to amount to a proof. Parallels have been pointed out between our Epistles and Hermas, Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, and other writers of the second century; but they are similar in character to those cited between James and the literature of that period, and do not afford appreciable evidence that 2 Peter was known to any of these writers.

Early and other testimony. There is practical agreement that 'no certain trace' of this Epistle can be found until far on in the third century[4]. It is not included in the Peshitto or Syriac Version, or in the earlier editions of the Old Latin Version[5], or in the Muratorian Canon[6]. There is no evidence to shew that it was known to Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria[7], or Cyprian. Hippolytus, however, seems to have been acquainted with it. Origen is the first writer who connects Peter's name with the Epistle, and he speaks of the Petrine authorship as doubtful[8]. Eusebius includes it amongst the disputed books[1]. Didymus, head of the catechetical school of Alexandria in the second half of the fourth century[2], speaks of the Epistle as spurious and not in the Canon[3]. Jerome mentions that in his time it was rejected by many.

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[1] 2 Pet. i. 3, 6, 7, ii. 9, iii. 11. 'To be godly' and 'godly' (adv.) only occur in Acts and the Pastorals.

[2] Circa B.C. 20 to A.D. 50. Cf. Salmon, *N. T. Introd.* pp. 549 f.

[3] Circa A.D. 95. Cf. Abbott and Farrar, *Expositor*, 1882, and Hatch, *Encyc. Brit.*, 'Epistles of Peter.'

[4] So Weiss, Eng. tr., ii. 169.

[5] Westcott, *N. T. Canon*, pp. 260 f.

[6] Which, however, also omits 1 Peter.

[7] Cl. Al. is said to have commented on the 'Catholic Epistles,' but it is not expressly stated that this term included 2 Peter. Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.* vi. 14.

[8] Ap. Eusebius, ibid. 25.

Our Epistle is found in the various MSS. of the Catholic Epistles, including the oldest; it was recognized as canonical by the Council of Carthage, A. D. 397; and from this time onwards was very generally accepted in the West, in Egypt, Palestine, and at Constantinople. Probably the recognition by these various authorities involved an otiose assent to the Petrine authorship; but there is no evidence that it was due to any deliberate critical judgement. In Syria and elsewhere in the East it was not fully accepted for centuries.

With the revival of criticism at the Reformation, the old doubts asserted themselves afresh, and the Petrine authorship was rejected by Calvin[4] and Erasmus.

Internal evidence. The Epistle, as we have seen, is expressly written in the name of the Apostle. Otherwise the contents do not point to authorship by Peter. We have already mentioned that the style is different from that of 1 Peter. A further difficulty is the reference in iii. 15, 16, to 'all the epistles' of Paul as misinterpreted 'like the other scriptures.' It is extremely difficult to believe that during the lifetime of Peter, the Pauline Epistles had already been placed on a level with the Old Testament.

Conclusion as to authorship. Let us briefly estimate the conclusions indicated by the evidence. On the one

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[1] *Antilegomena, Ch. Hist.* iii. 25.

[2] Died in A. D. 394 or 399, at the age of more than 83.

[3] At the end of his commentary on the Epistle, extant only in a Latin version.

[4] Calvin, however, considers that though 2 Peter was not actually written by the Apostle, it is Petrine in the sense of expressing his teaching.

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hand, the Epistle is written in the name of Peter. It is so frank and spontaneous, so earnest and spiritually-minded, that it was evidently written in perfect good faith. It has, however, been pointed out[1] that some one other than the Apostle might write in his name, as a mere matter of literary method, without any intention to deceive.

All the other important evidence is strongly against the Petrine authorship. Passing over less serious difficulties, we may enumerate the use made of Jude; the difference of style from 1 Peter; the reference to a number of Pauline Epistles as 'scripture'; the silence of the first two centuries, and the doubts of the third and fourth. The use of Jude, indeed, is rather a stumbling-block to modern sentiment than a weighty objection. 'The literary conscience was not yet aware of the sin of plagiarism,' and it appears from the indebtedness of 1 Peter to the Pauline Epistles that the chief of the apostles was sometimes dependent upon others for ideas and their expression. The departure from the style of 1 Peter might be due to the assistance of a secretary in writing 2 Peter. But there seems no satisfactory explanation of the reference to the Pauline Epistles as Scripture, if our Epistle was the work of Peter.

The absence of early external evidence has sometimes been explained by the brevity of the Epistle. But Jude is much shorter, and Jude was a far less important personage than Peter; yet the external evidence for Jude is much stronger than that for 2 Peter. It has been suggested that our Epistle was eclipsed, as it were, by 1 Peter, and therefore ignored. The argument is not very plausible. Philemon, for instance, is even shorter than Jude, yet it was not eclipsed by the thirteen Pauline Epistles; and the external evidence for it is far more abundant than for 2 Peter. It is, no doubt, possible that a short letter of Peter may have been lost sight of for a time, and discovered about the end of the second century; but it is clear from the doubts of the early church that when 2 Peter made its appearance, it was not accompanied by any credentials which could establish its Petrine authorship. But, as Professor Salmon says[1], 'Since the end of the fourth century no new revelation has been made to enlighten the Church on the subject of the Canon; and therefore we can have no infallible certainty on matters about which learned men of that age thought they had not evidence to warrant a confident assertion.' The acceptance of 2 Peter by various sections of the church after the fourth century establishes its canonical authority, but adds nothing to the evidence for the Petrine authorship. Such acceptance was not due to the further prosecution, but to the abandonment of critical investigation. Naturally the conventional title of an epistle beginning 'Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,' was the 'Second Epistle of Peter,' and the title 'Peter' is used by writers like Origen[2] and Didymus, who rejected the Petrine authorship. Popular criticism is always eager to take the line of least resistance, to connect documents with distinguished names, to evade the discomfort of uncertainty, and to treat conventional phrases as literal statements of fact. Moreover, the principle that apostolic authorship was a condition of canonicity was two-edged. Popular logic would readily draw the conclusion that since 2 Peter was practically recognized as canonical, it must have been written by the Apostle. In the absence of any commanding scholarly authority, the popular assumption that Peter wrote both the Epistles which bore his name passed unchallenged till it attained the dubious dignity of a tradition.

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[1] General Introduction, p. 10.

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[1] *N. T. Introduction* ^{3}, p. 500.

[2] Only in the untrustworthy Latin translations of Rufinus, through which, however, Origen's views would be known to Western readers.

On the whole, the available evidence is against the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter; but the view of Calvin, revived by some modern critics, that the actual author based his work on sayings or writings of the Apostle, is by no means impossible.

Conclusion as to date. If the Petrine authorship were accepted, the reference to the Pauline Epistles and to 1 Peter and the use of Jude would require a date at the very end of the Apostle's life, i.e. about A.D. 66. But these features are more easily understood if the book was written still later, i.e. some time in the second century. The external evidence shews that it was in existence before the close of that century, hence the Epistle is very commonly dated between A.D. 100 and 175.

Personality of the author. In connexion with 1 Peter a sketch of the Apostle's life was given. If 2 Peter had a different author, we can only say that he was some devout Christian and careful student of apostolic literature. His use of Old Testament history by no means proves him to be a Jew. If we ascribe the Epistle to some one other than Peter, we have no more right to brand the author as a 'forger' than we have to style Peter a 'dishonest plagiarist,' if we accept his authorship.

Current views. The Petrine authorship has been defended—not in all cases as certain, but as at any rate probable—by a number of critics, e.g. Alford, Olshausen, and Keil, and, more recently, Lumby, Salmon, Warfield, Spitta, and Zahn. Those who take this view usually date the Epistle in the closing years of Peter's life, and after 1 Peter. Spitta, however, places 2 Peter before both 1 Peter and Jude. Some critics, like Weiss, leave the authorship an open question. Others propose to sacrifice part in order to save the rest, e.g. Prof. Vernon Bartlet suggests that 2 Pet. ii. 1—iii. 7 may be a later addition to an epistle actually written by the Apostle. But the majority of recent critics follow Calvin and Erasmus in rejecting the Petrine authorship. Ewald assigned the

Epistle to the end of the first century; Bleek, Ramsay, Hausrath, Ritschl, Adeney, &c., to about A. D. 100–150; Harnack to about A. D. 160–175. It is usually regarded as later than 1 Peter.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. If Peter be accepted as the author, the Epistle will have been written at Rome, like 1 Peter, on similar grounds. If it is not by the Apostle, it was probably composed by a member of one of the churches for whose benefit it was intended, i. e. in Asia Minor[1].

To whom addressed. Although the opening salutation is general, 'to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us,' later on it is implied that the letter was written for the recipients of 1 Peter—'This is now . . . the second epistle that I write unto you[2].' It professes therefore to be addressed to 'the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia[3]'. If Peter was the author this description may be taken in the same sense as for 1 Peter. Otherwise it may be merely part of the literary setting. Certainly the Epistle seems intended for Gentile Christians; there is nothing to suggest that it was meant specially for Jews. It is clearly addressed to Greek-speaking communities acquainted with the Pauline Epistles and with 1 Peter, and fully recognizing the authority of both apostles, but apparently not familiar with Jude. These communities had been evangelized by a group of apostles which did not include Peter[4]. They were troubled by false teachers similar to those referred to in the letters in the Apocalypse to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Probably, therefore, it was first circulated in Asia Minor.

Occasion. The Epistle is anxious to promote the general edification of its readers; but it was specially written to deal with two particular difficulties. First, the churches addressed were disturbed by false teachers, who apparently taught some form of Antinomian Gnosticism, such as is known to have been current in Asia Minor in the second century, having grown from germs referred to in Colossians and the Apocalypse. Their gnosticism consisted in a claim to superior enlightenment, *gnosis*, in virtue of which they set aside the authority of the church and the restraints of Christian morality[1]. They thus became Antinomian, i. e. they set themselves in opposition to[2] the law[3] of faith. A tendency to Antinomianism has always accompanied the undue emphasizing of Paul's teaching on justification, and these false teachers claimed his authority for their erroneous doctrines[4]. Perhaps the idea of writing this letter was suggested to the author by his meeting with the Epistle of Jude, and being struck with its suitability to the churches of his own time and country. It is even possible that his copy of Jude did not contain the opening verses, and was not described as Jude's. The author may have been told or may have imagined that Peter was the author of Jude, and thus have been led to write his expanded version in the name of the chief of the apostles.

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[1] See next paragraph.

[2] 2 Pet. i. 1, iii. 1.

[3] 1 Pet. i. 1. Cf. p. 44.

[4] 2 Pet. iii. 2.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

THE use made by 2 Peter of Jude is an interesting example of the introduction into a work, without acknowledgement, of a new edition of a portion of an older work, a common habit of ancient Eastern authors. The object in the present instance was to repeat and emphasize the protest of Jude against Antinomianism[1]. The Epistle is also remarkable for the stress laid on 'knowledge'; for its teaching on inspiration, i. 20, 21; its reference to the Transfiguration, i. 16, 17; its treatment of the difficulties raised by the delay of the Second Coming, iii. 1–10; its picture of the close of the present dispensation by the destruction of the universe by fire, iii. 7, 10, 12; and its reference to the Pauline Epistles as canonical and sometimes obscure, iii. 15, 16.

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[1] 2 Pet. ii. 10, 19, &c.

[2] *Anti.*

[3] *Nomos.*

[4] 2 Pet. iii. 15.

i. 1, 2. Salutation.

3–11. Preliminary general exhortation to steadfastness, and an intelligent, consistent Christian life.

12–18. Peter confirms the readers in their faith, relying on his authority as an eye-witness of the Transfiguration.

19–21. How that faith is also confirmed by the Old Testament, properly understood.

ii. 1—iii. 4. St. Jude's warning to the Antinomians is repeated, and applied to the circumstances of the readers of the Epistle. Examples from the Old Testament of false teachers and sinners, and their doom, and the deliverance of the faithful. Fallen angels. The Antediluvians and Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot. Description of the false teachers, who are compared to Balaam, and will incur a similar doom. The disastrous consequences of falling from grace.

The Epistle is written to remind its readers of the teaching of the prophets and apostles, especially the prediction that immoral scoffers would arise.

iii. 4–9. The argument of the scoffers and its refutation.

10–13. The Day of Judgement and its sequel; such a prospect should be an incentive to holy living.

14–18. Final exhortation to consistency and steadfastness reinforced by the authority of the Pauline Epistles, properly understood.

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[1] See on Jude.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

Anonymous. The First Epistle of John is entirely anonymous; it does not in any way, either directly or indirectly, claim to be written by the apostle John. But the title of the Epistle in the oldest, fourth-century, manuscripts of the Greek text is 'Ιωάννου α', or 1 John.

Relation to other Johannine books. In tone, ideas, style, and vocabulary our Epistle very closely resembles the fourth Gospel and 2 and 3 John. It is pervaded by the same earnest, affectionate spirit, and displays the same interest in the doctrine of the Person of Christ. It pursues the same method of developing an idea by a series of short co-ordinate clauses, similar in form, but presenting different aspects of the same truth by slight variations of expression—a method which has much in common with the parallelism of the Psalms and other ancient Hebrew poetry; e. g.—

1 John iv. 7, 8, 11, 12. 'Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God;

'And every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.

'He that loveth not knoweth not God;

'For God is love.'

'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'

'If we love one another, God abideth in us.'

John i. 1–3. 'In the beginning was the Word,
'And the Word was with God,

'And the word was God.

'The same was in the beginning with God.

'All things were made by him;

'And without him was not anything made that hath been made.'

Similarly there is a constant tendency in both Gospels and Epistles to recur to an idea after an interval, expressing it in the same or slightly different words, e.g.—

1 John ii. 6. 'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.'

iii. 6. 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.'

iii. 24. 'He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him.'

John xv. 4. 'The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.'

5. 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.'

10. 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.'

The strong emphasis laid alike by the Gospels and Epistles on the same great themes is shewn by the frequent use of such key-words as:—

NUMBER OF TIMES USED IN:

	Gospel.	*Epistles.*	*Rev.*	*Rest of N. T.*
World (*κόσμος*)	78	23	3	80
Life (*ζωή*)	41	13	17	76
Death (*θάνατος*)	8	6	19	83
Truth (*ἀλήθεια*) . . .	25	20	...	66
Falsehood (*ψεῦδος*) . . .	1	2	3	4
Light (*φῶς*)	22	6	3	41
Darkness (*σκοτία*) . . .	8	5	...	2
Darkness (*σκότος*) . . .	1	1	...	30
Genuine (R. V. 'true'), (*ἀληθινός*)	9	4	10	4
Love, *v.* (*ἀγαπᾶν*)	36	31	4	65
Love, *n.* (*ἀγάπη*)	7	18	2	89
Love, *v.* (*φιλεῖν*)	13	...	2	10
Hate, *v.* (*μισεῖν*)	11	5	4	20

It will be noted that both Gospel and Epistles are alike fond of contrasts, Life and Death, Light and Darkness, Love and Hate ; and prefer to dwell on the positive ideas, Life, Light, and Love.

Another feature common to these works is the slight use made of the Old Testament. The Gospel contains fewer Old Testament phrases and quotations in proportion to its length than any other of the longer books of the New Testament ; the Epistles shew hardly any trace of the direct study of the Old Testament ; they might almost have been written by some one who had never read any portion of it, but had heard something of its history and teaching, so that he could refer to such an incident as the murder of Abel by Cain[1].

Prima facie, at any rate, such resemblances as have been described and illustrated leave a very strong impression that the fourth Gospel and the Epistles are the work of the same author.

When, however, we compare the Epistles with Revelation, the result is entirely different. There are, indeed, resemblances ; these are illustrated by the table on the vocabulary of the Johannine books given above. The same table also exemplifies the striking differences between the vocabularies of the Revelation and the other books. Revelation also has its characteristic words ; e. g. 'endurance,' *hupomone*, occurs in it seven times, and is common elsewhere in the New Testament ; 'Almighty,' *pantokrator*, occurs in it nine times, and also once in a quotation from Isaiah in 2 Cor. vi. 18 ; neither of these words occurs in any of the other Johannine books. Again, the Greek of the Gospels and Epistles is very simple but also grammatical and idiomatic, that of Revelation is the broken Greek of a foreigner who has learnt the language imperfectly. The Epistles, as we have seen, shew scant traces of the literary use of the

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[1] 1 John iii. 12 ; but cf. Hühn, *A. T. Citate*, p. 270.

Old Testament, but a large part of Revelation is a mosaic of phrases from the Hebrew Scriptures. The Gospels and Epistles are practically Pauline, a natural development from the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles; the Revelation is the most Judaizing document in the New Testament. As far as purely internal evidence is concerned, the prima facie impression, at any rate, is that the Revelation was written by some one other than the author of the rest of the Johannine books. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, A. D. 248–265, insists at some length on the differences between the Revelation and the other books as a reason for ascribing the former to another 'John,' not the Apostle [1].

Relation to the rest of the New Testament. The theological standpoint of the Epistle is that of the Pauline teaching in its final form. The author moves in this sphere of ideas with an ease, freedom, and originality which imply familiar acquaintance and mature reflection. He assumes the Pauline positions as to the offer of the Gospel on the same terms to Jew and Gentile, as to the freedom of Christians from the obligations of the law [2], and as to the Person and atoning work of Christ. The author of I John probably did not make literary use of Paul's Epistles in writing his own, but he must have written some time after that apostle. Parallels with the other books of the New Testament are such as would arise from the authors' independent study of primitive Christian teaching.

Early testimony. Passing over parallels of doubtful significance, we meet with the first certain traces of our Epistle in Polycarp and Papias. Thus I John iv. 2, 3:

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[1] Ap. Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.* vii. 25.

[2] This point is more important here than in reference to James; the latter may have been written to a purely Jewish church, which took the law for granted, and was ignorant of any controversy on the subject; but I John cannot have been written exclusively to Jews.

'Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which confesseth not[1] Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist.' Polycarp[2] vii: 'For every one who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist: and every one who does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil.'

Eusebius[3] tells us that Papias[4] made use of our Epistle, but does not state that he spoke of it as John's. These references, however, shew that 1 John was in existence early in the second century, certainly before A.D. 120. The Epistle, however, is expressly referred to as John's by the various authorities of the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, viz. Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and the Muratorian Canon. It was included in the Old Latin and Peshitto or Syriac Versions; it is placed by Eusebius among the *Homologoumena*, or books universally accepted, and is spoken of in similar terms by Jerome. With two or three very insignificant exceptions it was always accepted as canonical and Johannine until the Reformation.

Internal evidence. The errors attacked in 1 John were akin to those taught by various heretics of the second century. The emphasis laid on the coming of Christ 'in the flesh[5]' suggests the teaching that denied the reality of the Incarnation, and asserted that Christ only appeared to be man; that, for instance, the Spirit descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism, and left him before his crucifixion[6]. The distinction between 'sin unto death' and 'sin not unto death[7]' might refer to the idea that sin after baptism could not be forgiven.

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[1] There is a various reading 'annulleth.'

[2] The authorship of this letter by Polycarp has been challenged, but is now generally accepted.

[3] *Ch. Hist.* iii. 29.

[4] See p. 38.

[5] 1 John iv. 2, 3.

[6] Doceticism, one aspect of Gnosticism.

[7] 1 John v. 16.

Other features also shew that the Epistle was not written in the very early days of the church. 'It is the last hour.' There were those who sought to lead Christians astray; and antichrist, whose coming had been long looked for, was 'now . . . in the world already.' Indeed, there were 'many antichrists[1].'

Conclusion as to date and authorship. In view of the striking resemblance between 1 John and the fourth Gospel, and also of the marked contrast between it and Revelation, a complete discussion would consider all the evidence as to the two other books. Such a discussion would be out of place here, and the reader is referred to the volumes dealing with the other Johannine writings.

The evidence directly connected with 1 John is quite consistent with authorship by the Apostle; the external evidence distinctly favours that view, and the internal raises no strong objection. It is altogether reasonable to suppose that views which were prevalent in the second century had already made their appearance at the close of the Apostolic Age.

If therefore we may here assume that John wrote the fourth Gospel, we shall also ascribe to him this Epistle.

It is not quite certain which of the two books is the earlier; probably they were written about the same time, so that an approximate date, A.D. 90–100, if accepted for the Gospel, will also hold good for the Epistle.

Current views. The majority of scholars hold that the two works were written by the same author, and that the Gospel is the earlier. As a rule, therefore, acceptance or denial of Johannine authorship, if held for the one, is extended to the other. So, too, those who ascribe the Gospel to John the Presbyter, or some John other than the son of Zebedee, usually hold the same view as to the Epistle[2].

As to date, some have placed 1 John shortly before

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[1] 1 John ii. 18, 26. iv. 3.

[2] Cf. vol. on Gospel of John.

A.D. 70, on the altogether insufficient ground that 'the last hour' may refer to the last days of Jerusalem, as the closing period of the old dispensation. On the other hand, it has been placed in the last half of the second century. But, for the most part, the dates assigned to the Epistle range between A.D. 80 and A.D. 120. Those who ascribe it to John date it towards the close of his life, about A.D. 80–100; those who reject the Johannine authorship still date the book in the same period or somewhat later.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. The Epistle itself neither states nor implies anything as to the place where it was written, but tradition suggests Ephesus, where John is said to have spent the closing years of his life.

To whom addressed. The absence of any address, introductory greeting, or closing salutation has suggested that 1 John is not a letter but a treatise; or that, if it is a letter, it was written for all Christians, and not for any particular church or churches. But 1 John is throughout an earnest personal appeal to those with whom the writer was well acquainted, and in whom he took a deep interest. He writes to 'my little children[1]'; he knows the spiritual condition of various classes amongst his readers, that the fathers 'know him which is from the beginning,' the young men 'have overcome the evil one,' the little children 'know the Father'; and knows also that there are those who seek to lead them astray[2]. He seems, therefore, to be writing for some church or churches with which he was personally connected. If John wrote the Epistle at Ephesus, it was probably written for the Christians of Asia Minor. Augustine, indeed, according to the extant text of his works, quotes 1 John iii. 2 as being said by John in the Epistle to the Parthians[1]; but this destination is most improbable in itself, and is not corroborated by any important authorities. Hence it is commonly supposed that 'Parthians' is a blunder of a copyist, corresponding to a misprint; or that Augustine made a mistake.

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[1] 1 John ii. 1.

[2] 1 John ii. 13, 26.

Occasion. The Epistle was written to combat the errors as to the Person of Christ, and the Christian life and hope, which later on became prevalent and defined under the names of Gnosticism, Doceticism, Montanism, &c.[2] Moreover, as controversy is usually fatal to mutual good feeling amongst Christians, the circumstances gave special occasion for John to insist upon his favourite truth that Christians should love one another. It has been suggested that the Epistle was written as a commentary on some of the ideas of the Gospel, and was perhaps intended to be circulated with it.

LIFE OF ST. JOHN.

Here, again, the reader is referred to the volumes on the Gospel and Revelation for a fuller treatment of the subject, since 1 John and the fourth Gospel stand in practically the same relation to the character, life, and work of the Apostle. Here, therefore, very little needs to be said. Like most of the apostles, John was a Galilæan; like Peter and Andrew and his own brother James, he was part-owner of a fishing-boat, and worked and traded as a fisherman; if, as is often supposed, he was first cousin to Jesus[3], this relationship is a point of resemblance between him and James and Jude, the brethren of the Lord. Like Peter and Andrew and his own brother James, he was first a disciple of the Baptist, and then one of the inner circle of the apostles of our Lord. Hence much that has been said of the early life of Peter, and James the brother of our Lord, and of Peter's life during the ministry of Christ, will also apply to John.

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[1] *Quaest. Evangel.* ii. 39.

[2] Internal evidence, p. 75.

[3] 'His mother's sister' in John xix. 25 is often identified with 'Salome' and 'the mother of the sons of Zebedee' in the parallel passages, Mark xv. 40, Matt. xxvii. 56; so Westcott on John xix. 25.

Tradition states that the Apostle survived till the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98–117, if so he was probably younger than our Lord, and perhaps the youngest of the apostles. Possibly his youth may have been one cause of the special affection of Christ for him, which gained him the title 'the disciple whom Jesus loved[1].'

In the Synoptic Gospels John is usually spoken of in connexion with the Twelve, the inner circle, or his brother James. He and his brother received from our Lord the title 'Boanerges,' 'Sons of thunder[2]'; they suggested to him that he should call down fire from heaven upon an inhospitable Samaritan village[3]; they, too, asked that they might sit on his right and left in his kingdom[4]. Probably the moving spirit on such occasions was the elder brother James, and we need not credit John with all the fierceness and ambition which they imply. There is also an utterance of the Apostle which is commonly cited as an illustration of his 'burning temper.' We read that, on a certain occasion, 'John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us[5].' But the 'we' here is probably the Twelve, and the prime mover would be the impulsive Peter, seconded perhaps by James, the son of Zebedee; John may have merely acquiesced in the action of the rest. His words to our Lord were probably prompted by doubts as to whether they had done right. In the fourth Gospel John is specially prominent in connexion with the last week, the Passion, and Resurrection. Both here and in Acts[1] John appears in close association with Peter; their joint visit to Samaria is John's last appearance in Acts. The only mention of him in Paul's Epistles is the statement[2], 'James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.' Thus, at Jerusalem, John naturally belonged to the Apostles of the Circumcision. The martyrdom of his brother, James[3], was probably a crisis in his life. On the one hand, such an experience would strengthen and refine his character; on the other, it gave him a position of greater independence and importance. There is, however, nothing in the Acts to suggest any assertion of such independence on the part of John; initiative and decision always seem to rest with Peter, or James the brother of the Lord.

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[1] John xiii. 23, &c. This disciple is almost universally identified with John; the N. T., however, nowhere states that he was John.

[2] Mark iii. 17. The translation 'Sons of thunder' is regarded by some as an inaccurate rendering added by an editor.

[3] Luke ix. 54.

[4] Mark x. 35; in Matt. xx. 20, their mother makes the request.

[5] Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 49, A. V.

The New Testament tells us nothing as to the Apostle's later history, except that in Revelation we find him[4] at Patmos, and he writes to the churches of Asia Minor with an authority which implies personal relations between him and them. There is a very large number of traditions concerning his later life. The most important statements are that he spent the closing years of his life at Ephesus; that he survived to extreme old age; that he was involved in controversy with heretics—the Gnostic Cerinthus or the Judaizing Ebion; that he had miraculous escapes from martyrdom; and that his last years afforded many beautiful examples of love, forbearance, and forgiveness.

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[1] Acts iii, viii. 14. [2] Gal. ii. 9. [3] Acts xii. 2.

[4] Revelation, however, is simply written in the name of 'John,' who is nowhere expressly identified with the Apostle.

We do not know how, or why, or when John left Jerusalem and came to Ephesus; or what interval, if any, intervened between his departure from the one and his arrival at the other.

If we ascribe Revelation to John, we may suppose that it largely represents the thoughts and feelings derived from his Jewish training, and from the influence of his brother and the Apostles of the Circumcision. The martyrdom of his brother and his departure from Palestine set him free from such influences; henceforth his mind was solely dominated by his recollections of the life and character and teaching of his beloved Master; and thus the Gospel and Epistles are the fruit of his inspired meditations and mature reflections.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

THE general line of thought of 1 John cannot be shewn by a brief analysis; the successive paragraphs are largely kaleidoscopic combinations of a few leading thoughts. The following is only a rough outline[1] of the structure of the Epistle.

i. 1-4. Introduction.
The Apostle's testimony to the Incarnation and its results.

i. 5—ii. 17. The contrast between light, truth, righteousness, love, and God, and those who walk in the light (the church) on the one hand; and darkness, falsehood, sin, hatred, and the Evil One, and those who walk in darkness (the world), on the other. The former overcome and abide; the latter are conquered and pass away.

ii. 18-28. Warning against the 'antichrists,' false teachers who have separated from the church, and deny the reality of the Incarnation.

ii. 29—iii. 18. The children of God are known by righteousness and by their mutual love. Sin is a mark of the children of the Devil, who hate the true believers.

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[1] Cf. Holtzmann.

iii. 19—v. 12. Righteousness and mutual love are combined with faith alike in the Deity and Incarnation of Jesus; and with loyalty to the Apostolic Church. By these various tokens Christians are assured that they are the sons of God, and are able to distinguish the true teachers from the false.

v. 13-21. Practical conclusion: the assurance of eternal life, and the efficacy of intercessory prayer for all except the worst class of sinners. Summary of the teaching of the Epistle.

This Epistle applies the teaching of the fourth Gospel[1] to the special needs of its readers. The latter were exposed to the errors taught by the forerunners of the Docetic Gnostics, who denied that Christ was really man. Hence the Epistle emphasizes the reality of the Incarnation, and does not follow the Gospel in dealing at length with the relation of the Son to the Father. Similarly, the Epistle is occupied with the nature of God as light and love, and does not dwell, as the Gospel does, on the transcendental attributes of Christ, while, however, it follows the Gospel in emphasizing his Divine sonship.

Like the other general Epistles, it combats an Antinomian tendency by insisting that morality is essential to the Christian life. In face of teachers who misrepresented Christianity, the faithful are urged to unity and mutual love; and one line of Christian thought reaches its climax in the reiterated statement that 'God is love,' iv. 8, 16. Other notable features are the designation of Christ as the Paraclete or Comforter, ii. 1, of the false teachers as antichrists, ii. 18, and of the gift of the Spirit as an unction or anointing, ii. 20, 27; also the appeal for confirmation of Christian truth to the inner witness of the Spirit, v. 10, rather than to the Resurrection or any external evidences; the statement that the condition on which prayer is answered is that it should be according to the will of God, v. 14.

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[1] Cf. pp. 71 ff.

The passage on the 'sin unto death,' and 'not unto death,' v. 16, 17, has been the subject of much controversy. The famous verses on the three witnesses, v. 7. 8, cease to be an express statement of the doctrine of the Trinity when they are read in the correct text; and in v. 20 the words 'This is the true God' must be applied to the Father and not to Christ.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

JOHN

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

Written in the name of 'The Presbyter.' This Epistle also is anonymous; it opens, 'The presbyter to the elect (lady or church).' The identity of this 'presbyter' has been matter of controversy from the first Christian centuries until the present day. He is sometimes identified with John the apostle—thus the title of the Epistle in the oldest Greek manuscripts is *Ἰωάννου β'*, i. e. 2 John—sometimes with a certain 'John the Presbyter,' who is said to have lived at Ephesus about the same time as the Apostle.

Relation to the rest of the New Testament. As we have already said[1], the tone, ideas, style, and vocabulary of this Epistle present a marked resemblance to the fourth Gospel, and 1 and 3 John, and a striking contrast to Revelation. It contains the Johannine key-words[2], 'love, truth, world,' and is specially connected with 1 John by a reference to 'antichrist' and other features, and with 2 John by the occurrence in both of a concluding statement that he will communicate by word of mouth certain matters which he does not care to commit to paper[3]. As in each of the Pastoral Epistles the opening salutation includes the phrase, 'Grace, mercy, peace.' There are also points of contact with 1 Peter; in that

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[1] p. 71.

[2] Cf. table, p. 72.

[3] 1 John ii. 18, 22, iv. 3; 2 John 7, 12; 3 John 13, 14.

Epistle the author styles himself a 'co-presbyter,' and sends greeting from an 'elect (lady or church)[1].'

Early testimony. The general condition of the church seems to have been similar to that implied in the *Teaching of the Twelve*, e.g. the churches are urged not to receive itinerant teachers unless they are assured of the soundness of their doctrine. Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria quote the Epistle as John's. It was perhaps included in the Old Latin Version[2]. The Muratorian Canon speaks of more than one Epistle of John. Hence our Epistle was current as John's before the end of the second century. It was not, however, universally accepted. Origen was doubtful about it; Eusebius placed it amongst the *Antilegomena* or disputed books; while, according to Jerome, it was often ascribed to John the Presbyter.

Conclusion. The external evidence is not inconsistent with authorship by John. The doubts of early writers are probably due to the lack of express testimony to the Johannine authorship; and this lack of testimony was due to the shortness of the Epistle, and—if 'the elect' was a 'lady'—to its having been addressed to an individual. We may therefore follow the internal evidence, and attribute 2 John to the same author and period as the fourth Gospel and the other Epistles[3].

Current views. The two shorter Epistles are usually ascribed to the same author as 1 John; a few scholars, however, reject this identity of authorship, more especially some who have accepted the Johannine authorship of the other books, but have ascribed 2 and 3 John to 'John the Presbyter,' on account of the opening sentence in each Epistle.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. The contents of the Epistle do not directly help us to ascertain where it was written, but its close connexion with the Gospel and 1 John suggest that it may have been written from Ephesus[1].

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[1] 1 Pet. v. 1, 13.

[2] The absence of any reference to 2 John in Tertullian may be due to its brevity.

[3] See p. 76.

To whom addressed. If in the opening clause we render 'to the elect lady,' and take the words literally, the letter was written to some Christian woman, distinguished for piety and zeal. There would be nothing to shew where she lived. In favour of this view we have the following facts: the phrase 'elect lady' would naturally be addressed to an individual, and the second person is sometimes used; and a 'house' is spoken of, verse 10, and no church; 'lady,' *kyria*, is shewn from letters preserved in early papyri[2] to be a common term of endearment; the Third Epistle is certainly addressed to an individual. If this view is accepted, the 'lady' must be some eminent Christian, like Phœbe, Rom. xvi. 1, or Priscilla, who had a church in her house, Rom. xvi. 5; and the 'children' are not merely her family, but the members of that church. These considerations are not conclusive, as personification is quite possible, and, if once adopted, personal terms, like *kyria*, would naturally be used. The general character of the exhortations, &c., better suit a church than a family; and critics are divided on this question. It is, therefore, a possible alternative to take the phrase figuratively, and to understand 'elect lady' of some church, perhaps in Asia Minor. Clement of Alexandria, in an obscure fragment[3], speaks of the Epistle as written to 'virgins'; and states that it is nominally written to a Babylonian woman called Electa, but that the 'election' of the holy church is intended[4].

Occasion. The church addressed, or to which the 'elect lady' belonged, seems to have been in danger of falling under the influence of false teachers, by whom it was likely to be visited; the letter is a caution against receiving them.

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[1] See p. 77. [2] T. R. Harris, *Expositor*, 1901.

[3] Extant only in a Latin translation, and possibly due in part or wholly to the translator.

[4] Cf. commentary on verse 1.

JOHN THE PRESBYTER.

Something has already been said about John the Apostle, in connexion with 1 John; it may be well to say a few words here about the other John, to whom some or all of the Johannine writings are sometimes ascribed, since the word 'presbyter' in the opening verses of 2 and 3 John is often supposed to shew that he was the author of, at any rate, these two letters. All that we know of this 'John the Presbyter' is derived from a passage in Eusebius[1]. He gives the following quotation from Papias: 'If I met with any one who had been a follower of the Presbyters anywhere, I made a point of inquiring what were the statements of the Presbyters; what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip; what by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; what was said by Aristion, and the Presbyter John, disciples of the Lord.' Eusebius goes on to discuss this passage. He considers that Papias intended to distinguish John the Presbyter from the Apostle, and continues: 'Hence we have here a proof of the statement made by those who assert that there were two of the same name [John] in Asia, that there were also two tombs in Ephesus, and that both are called John's even to this day . . . . He [Papias] says also that he was a hearer of Aristion and of John the Presbyter. For as he has often mentioned them by name, he also gives their statements in his own works.'

John the Presbyter, therefore, was a disciple of Jesus, and, apparently, was living in Ephesus at the same time as John the Apostle. As, however, Papias was a hearer of the Presbyter, but not, it seems, of the Apostle, the former probably survived John. The circumstances suggest that the presbyter was very young when he was a disciple of Jesus, and that he lived to an advanced age.

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[1] *Ch. Hist.* iii. 39.

Some authorities identify the 'John the Presbyter' of Papias and Eusebius with the Apostle, contrary to the decided opinion of Eusebius himself, and to the natural interpretation of the words of Papias.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

1–3. Salutation.

4–11. Warning against false teachers.

12, 13. Promise of a visit. Message of goodwill.

The second and third Epistles (especially 2. 10 and 3. 9–12) shew that a sharp struggle for the control of the churches had broken out between the Christians who were faithful to apostolic teaching and those who opposed them.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

Written in the name of 'The Presbyter.' This Epistle also is anonymous; it opens, 'The presbyter[1] to the beloved Gaius.' The title of the Epistle in the oldest Greek manuscripts is Ἰωάννου γʹ, i.e. 3 John, where 'John' probably stands for the Apostle.

Relation to the rest of the New Testament. We have already mentioned[2] that this Epistle closely resembles the fourth Gospel and the other two Epistles, especially 3 John, and is in striking contrast to the Revelation. As regards language, there are several slight points of contact between 3 John and the Pastoral Epistles, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. The most noteworthy is the occurrence of the contrast between 'well-doing' and 'evil-doing[3],' both in 1 Pet. iii. 17 and 3 John 11.

Early testimony. In early literature there are even fewer traces of this Epistle than of 2 John. It was not included in the Peshitto, and there is no trace of it in the extant writings of Clement of Alexandria[4], Irenæus, Tertullian, or Cyprian. It is commonly said to have been included in the Old Latin, but, as far as available evidence is concerned, it may not have been added to that version before the fourth century[1]. The Muratorian Canon has a most obscure statement with regard to the Johannine Epistles[2]: it speaks of *two*, and couples them with Jude and the Wisdom of Solomon. Possibly the 'two' are the short Epistles, which, like Jude, were not universally received, and a reference to 1 John has been lost or accidentally omitted. If the 'two' are all the Johannine Epistles with which the author of the Canon was acquainted, they will be 1 and 2 John which were known in the West by the end of the second century, whereas 3 John cannot be traced there till later. There is no certain trace of 3 John till the third century. As in the case of 2 John, Origen is doubtful; Eusebius places the Epistle amongst the *Antilegomena*; and Jerome ascribes it to John the Presbyter.

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[1] See p. 87.

[2] pp. 71 ff.

[3] ἀγαθοποιεῖν and κακοποιεῖν.

[4] But cf. p. 63, note 7.

Conclusion and current views. As in the case of 2 John, we may follow the majority of critics in ascribing 3 John to the author and period of the fourth Gospel and 1 John. The still greater meagreness of early testimony is sufficiently explained by the fact that this very brief letter hardly touches upon any subject of general interest.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

As for 2 John. The close connexion with 2 John suggests that this Epistle was written from the same place, perhaps Ephesus. It is addressed to 'the beloved Gaius,' a name too common to warrant our identifying its owner with any one of the numerous Gaiuses mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament[1]. The occasion of the letter was as follows: Certain Christians, perhaps itinerant teachers, known to John, had come to the church to which Gaius belonged, and he had given them a hospitable welcome; but the church generally, under the influence of a certain Diotrephes, had refused to receive them, and had also declined to listen to a letter from John, of which these Christians may have been the bearers. It has been suggested, and seems probable, that this former letter was 2 John. The Apostle wrote first to the church; and then, finding that his letter and his emissaries were set at nought by the church generally, he wrote to his friend Gaius to commend him for his hospitality, and to encourage him to persevere in his loyalty to the cause of truth.

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[1] A fragment of 3 John is found in the MS. *d.* of the Old Latin, i.e. the Latin column of the Graeco-Latin Codex, D, sixth century, but it may have been made for that MS.

[2] Westcott, *Canon*, emends the text slightly and obtains the following: 'Epistulae sane Iudae et superscripti Iohannis duas in Catholica habentur; et Sapientia ab amicis Salomonis in honorem ipsius scripta.' In a footnote he suggests *duae* for *duas*, and *catholicis* (i.e. the Catholic Epistles) for *catholica* (the Catholic Church).

ANALYSIS[2]

1–4. Salutation to, and commendation of, Gaius.
5–8. In praise of hospitality.
9–11. Denunciation of Diotrephes.
12. Commendation of Demetrius.
13, 14. Promise of a visit. Greetings.

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[1] Cf. Commentary on verse 1.
[2] For significance see on 2 John.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF
JUDE

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

'Jude' is the brother of the Lord. The Epistle opens, 'Judas, slave of Jesus Christ, brother of James.' In Luke's lists of the Twelve there is a 'Judas of James[1],' but this should probably be understood '*son* of James[2]'; and the 'Judas' of the Epistle does not style himself 'apostle,' and speaks of 'the apostles' as a body to which he did not belong[3]. For these reasons, and for others given in the Introduction to James[4], this 'Judas' is commonly identified with Judas, the brother of the Lord[5], and therefore brother of James who wrote the Epistle, and not to be identified with the apostle 'Judas of James[6].'

Relation to the rest of the New Testament. It has already been pointed out that Jude is the basis of a large section of 2 Peter[7]. There are parallels to the Pauline Epistles. The description of the false teachers as 'natural[8], not having the Spirit,' reminds us of the familiar Pauline contrast between the 'natural' and the 'spiritual' man[9]—implies acquaintance with Paul's teaching, if not with his writings. The doxology[1] begins and ends like the closing doxology in Romans[2], and both passages contain the terms 'only God' and 'glory.' But these features may be part of the conventional formulæ of a doxology, like the 'yours truly' at the close of a modern letter. Moreover, it is not certain that the doxology in Romans was part of the original text. The passage[3], 'Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord . . . how that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts,' implies that the author and his readers were acquainted with an oral tradition or written record of such teaching of the apostles. Some have seen in these words a reference to Paul's speech at Miletus to the elders of Ephesus, or to the announcement of the coming of false teachers in the Pastoral Epistles[4].

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[1] Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13.

[2] So R. V., which, however, places 'brother' in the margin as an alternative.

[3] Verse 18.

[4] See p. 12.

[5] Mark vi. 3.

[6] See p. 4.

[7] See p. 58.

[8] *ψυχικοί*; verse 19.

[9] 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15, &c.

Relation to other early literature. A remarkable feature of this brief letter is the large use made of pseudepigraphal literature[5]. The *Book of Enoch*, a compilation of material composed at various dates somewhere between B.C. 160 and A.D. 70, is expressly quoted[6]; and use is made of the *Assumption of Moses*[7].

The only important parallels with the Apostolic Fathers are with the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* Here, however, they are so striking that it has been suggested that portions of this work were composed by the author of Jude[8]. Compare, for instance, Jude 22 f.: 'And some reprove[9] in that they dispute with you; and some save, snatching them out of the fire ; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.'

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[1] Verses 24, 25.

[2] Ch. xvi. 25–27.

[3] Verse 18.

[4] Acts xx. 29, 30; 1 Tim. iv. 1–5, vi. 3–6; 2 Tim. iii. 1–9.

[5] Works written in the name of an ancient worthy by some later writer. The term is used technically for a class of Jewish and Christian religious works, similar in some respects to the O. and N. T. Apocrypha, but of less authority.

[6] Verses 14 f.; cf. also Commentary *passim.*

[7] Verse 9.

[8] So Chase, art. JUDE, Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible.*

[9] For this reading see note in Commentary.

Teaching, ii. 7 : 'Thou shalt not hate any one ; but some thou shalt reprove ; for some thou shalt pray ; and some thou shalt love.'

Early and other testimony. There is abundant evidence that Jude was current as Jude's some time before the end of the second century. It is expressly mentioned as Jude's by Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the Muratorian Canon, and was apparently included in the Old Latin Version. The absence of any reference to the Epistle in Irenæus and other early writers is doubtless due to its brevity. But it was not always accepted by those to whom it was known. Origen is doubtful ; the Epistle is not included in the Peshitto, and was not fully received in some parts of the East for centuries. Eusebius places it amongst the 'disputed books,' and Jerome mentions that in his time it was rejected by many ; but he himself maintains that it ought to be accepted as Scripture.

Internal evidence. The contents of the Epistle shew that some time had elapsed since the first foundation of the church. 'The apostles' are spoken of collectively, and their teaching is a matter of memory, a thing of the past[1]. The Pauline theology is fully developed[2]. It is 'the last time[1],' and the false teachers announced for that period have appeared. All this might have happened some time before the close of the first century. The contents neither establish nor disprove authorship by Jude.

Conclusion. The early testimony, especially the use of the Epistle by 2 Peter, shews that it was composed some time before A.D. 150. In this case the doubts of the early church do not seem fatal to the authorship of the Epistle by Jude the brother of the Lord. The brevity of the Epistle accounts for a comparative scantiness of attestation—and yet although shorter than 2 Peter it is more strongly attested—and this lack again may have contributed to the hesitation of the church to accept the Epistle. Probably, however, the main stumbling-block was not any doubt as to the authorship, but, as Jerome says, the fact that the Epistle gives a canonical status to the *Book of Enoch*, and, we may add, by implication, to the *Assumption of Moses.* In this case the hesitation to receive the book as canonical did not arise from doubts as to its authorship, but reluctance to accept it as canonical suggested that it could not have been written by a brother of the Lord.

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[1] Verses 17 f.

[2] See p. 92.

Again, the internal evidence requires us to date the Epistle not earlier than about A.D. 70–75, but there is no reason why a younger brother of our Lord should not have been living at that time. Hence we may accept the authorship by Jude at about A.D. 75.

Current views. In addition to Judas the apostle and Judas the brother of the Lord, the 'Judas' of this Epistle has been identified with Judas Barsabbas[1], and with a certain Judas who was bishop of Jerusalem in the reign of Hadrian. It has also been supposed that this 'Judas' is some person otherwise unknown.

Critics are divided as to authorship; perhaps the balance of authority is in favour of accepting the Epistle as the work of a Jude, either the apostle[2], or the brother of the Lord[3], or some other Jude[4]. Many of these date the Epistle shortly before A.D. 70, because there is no reference of any sort to the Fall of Jerusalem[5]; but the majority about A.D. 75–80[6]. Very many scholars, however, regard it as a work of the second century, either written in the name of, or mistakenly attributed to, Jude the apostle, or Jude the brother of the Lord[1], having possibly been actually written by some unknown 'Judas,' to whose name the description 'brother of James' was added through an erroneous conjecture.

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[1] Acts xv. 22.

[2] Winer.

[3] Weiss, Salmon, and the majority of those who date it before A.D. 80.

[4] So only a few, e.g. Spitta.

[5] Bleek, Weiss, &c.

[6] Ewald, Spitta, von Soden, Zahn, &c.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION.

Place of writing. The contents leave the place of writing entirely uncertain. The constant connexion of James with Jerusalem suggest that his brother Jude may have written from that city, if before A.D. 70, or at any rate from Palestine. On the other hand, the false teachers attacked in the Epistle have been identified with certain Alexandrian Gnostics, and it has been supposed that it was written from Alexandria or some other place in Egypt.

To whom addressed. The letter is addressed 'to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.' In spite of this very general description, it was no doubt intended to be placed in immediate circulation in some particular church or churches. The similarity of the false teachers to those of 2 Peter and Revelation has suggested that this Epistle was also addressed to the churches of Asia Minor; but there are very many possible alternatives, e. g. Corinth, the Syrian Antioch, &c. It has also been maintained that it was specially addressed to Jews, but the contents do not warrant this conclusion.

Occasion. It appears that some churches within the sphere of Jude's influence were troubled by an outbreak of Antinomian practice, if not teaching—the one was almost certain to be accompanied by the other[2]. Jude wrote to denounce the offenders and thus strengthen the hands of those who were loyal to Christian truth and morality.

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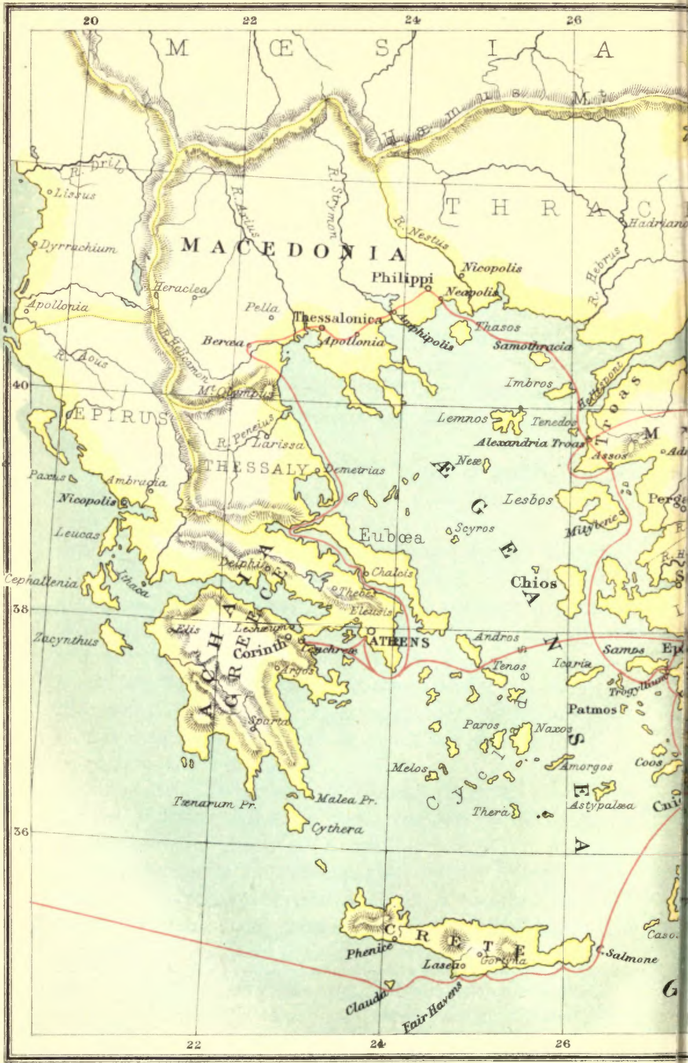
[1] Harnack, A.D. 100-130; Jülicher, A.D. 100-180.

[2] Cf. Commentary.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22
24
26
M Œ S I A
Hæmus M.
R. Drilo
Lissus
R. Axius
R. Strymon
R. Nestus
T H R A C
Hadriano
Dyrrachium
MACEDONIA
Nicopolis
R. Hebrus
Philippi
Neapolis
Heraclea
Apollonia
Pella
Thessalonica
Amphipolis
Thasos
Beræa
Apollonia
Samothracia
R. Aous
R. Haliacmon
Mt Olympus
Imbros
Hellespont
40
EPIRUS
Lemnos
Tenedos
Troas
M
Adr
R. Peneius
Larissa
Alexandria Troas
Assos
THESSALY
Demetrias
Neæ
Paxus
Ambracia
Nicopolis
Lesbos
Perg
Leucas
Scyros
Mitylene
Eubœa
Delphi
Chalcis
Cephallenia
Ithaca
Thebes
Chios
38
Eleusis
Elis
Lechæum
Zacynthus
Corinth
Cenchreæ
ATHENS
Andros
ACHAIA
GRÆCIA
Argos
Tenos
Icaria
Samos
Trogyllium
Patmos
Sparta
Paros
Naxos
Cyclades
Melos
Amorgos
Coos
ÆGEAN SEA
Tænarum Pr.
Malea Pr.
Thera
Astypalæa
Cni
36
Cythera
CRETE
Caso
Phenice
Gortyna
C. Salmone
Lasea
Clauda
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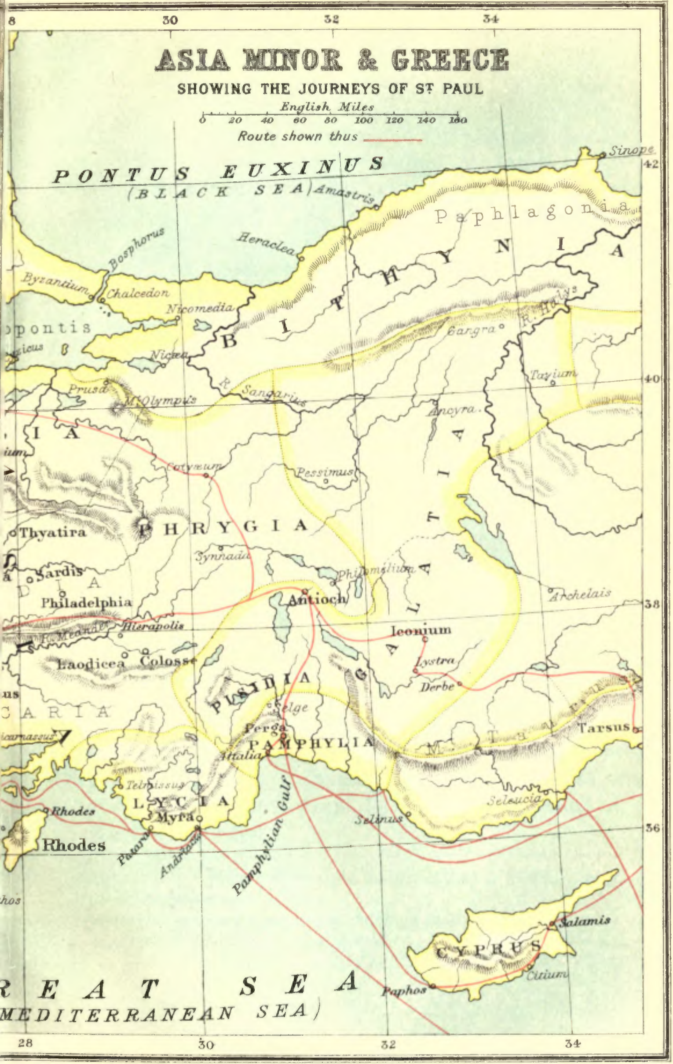

ASIA MINOR & GREECE

SHOWING THE JOURNEYS OF ST PAUL

English Miles

Route shown thus

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80
100
120
140
160
PONTUS EUXINUS
(BLACK SEA)
Sinope
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Amastris
Paphlagonia
Heraclea
Bosphorus
Byzantium
Chalcedon
Nicomedia
BITHYNIA
pontis
icus
Nicæa
Sangra
R. Halys
Tavium
40
Prusa
Mt. Olympus
R. Sangarius
Ancyra
IA
Cotyæum
Pessinus
GALATIA
Thyatira
PHRYGIA
Synnada
Sardis
Philomelium
DIA
Philadelphia
Antioch
Archelais
38
R. Meander
Hierapolis
Iconium
Laodicea
Colossæ
Lystra
PISIDIA
Derbe
CARIA
Selge
Tarsus
Perga
PAMPHYLIA
Attalia
Telmissus
LYCIA
Seleucia
Rhodes
Myra
Selinus
36
Rhodes
Patara
Andriace
Pamphylian Gulf
Salamis
CYPRUS
Citium
Paphos
EAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
28
30
32
34

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LIFE OF ST. JUDE.

Nothing is known of Jude beyond the bare fact that he was brother of Jesus, and therefore of James; that he was probably married, and went from place to place preaching the gospel[1]; and that, according to tradition[2], Jude's grandchildren became objects of suspicion to Domitian[3], as members of the House of David, and possible rallying points of Jewish disaffection. They were brought before the emperor, and stated that they were peasants, farming thirty-nine acres of land, and that the kingdom of Christ for which they looked 'was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic.' Domitian dismissed them as unworthy of serious notice; thereafter they ruled the churches both as confessors and relatives of the Lord, and survived till the reign of Trajan[4].

What has been said of the life of James before the Resurrection and immediately after will also apply to Jude. Probably the latter was the younger of the two, and was evidently far less conspicuous and influential. It appears from the probable date of this Epistle that Jude survived James, and perhaps in some measure succeeded to his authority, and so came to write the Epistle. Tradition, however, did not credit him with succeeding to the formal authority over the church at Jerusalem with which it invested James. In the list of bishops of Jerusalem given by Eusebius[5], James is succeeded by Symeon.

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[1] 1 Cor. ix. 5, 'Have we no right to lead about a wife . . . even as . . . the brethren of the Lord.'

[2] Recorded in a fragment of the writings of Hegesippus, c. A.D. 160, a church historian, who travelled much, visited Rome, Corinth, &c. This fragment is preserved in Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.* iii. 20.

[3] A.D. 81–98. [4] A.D. 98–117. [5] *Ch. Hist.* iv. 5. 3.

ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE

THE Epistle of Jude is remarkable for its inculcation of courtesy in religious controvesy, verse 9; for its scathing denunciation of Antinomianism, or the attempt to find in Christian teaching an excuse for sinful self-indulgence; and for its use of the *Book of Enoch* as an authority of canonical standing.

1, 2. Salutation.

3, 4. Reasons for writing.

5-7. Ancient examples of the doom of the wicked.

8-11. Examples of the sin of railing.

12, 13. Figurative description of the ungodly.

14-19. The ungodly a fulfilment of the prophecies of Enoch and of the apostles.

20-23. Application.

24, 25. Doxology.

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⁂ In addition to various references in the body of the book, the Editor wishes to acknowledge his special indebtedness to the works marked with an asterisk, and also to the *Hand-Commentar* on James, Peter, and Jude (von Soden), and on 1, 2, and 3 John (Holtzmann), to Meyer's *Commentar* on Peter and Jude (Dr. Ernest Kühl), and to Hühn's *Alttestamentlichen Citate.*

THE GENERAL EPISTLES

JAMES; I, II PETER; I—III JOHN

AND

JUDE

AUTHORIZED VERSION

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

Chap. 1

Salutation.

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus
Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered
abroad, greeting.

Duty of cheerful endurance.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into
3 divers temptations; knowing *this*, that the trying
4 of your faith worketh patience. But let patience
have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and
entire, wanting nothing.

Wisdom to be sought in single-minded faith.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,
that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not;
6 and it shall be given him. But let him ask in
faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is
like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and
7 tossed. For let not that man think that he shall
8 receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded
man *is* unstable in all his ways.

Motives for endurance.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he
10 is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low:
because as the flower of the grass he shall pass
11 away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a
burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the
flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion

Chap. 1

of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Reward of endurance.

12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Source of temptation.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with
14 evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust,
15 and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

God the source of good only.

16, 17 Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom
18 is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Be meek and docile.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man
20 be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of
21 God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Hearing useless without doing.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers
23 only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto
24 a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straight-
25 way forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and

Chap. 1

continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Acceptable religious observances.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart,
27 this man's religion *is* vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Respect of persons.

2 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of
2 persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there
3 come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here
4 under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Rich and poor, and the church.

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to
6 them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before
7 the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that

How to observe the law of liberty.

8 worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
9 but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet
11 offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not

Chap. 2

kill. Now if thou commmit no adultery, yet if
thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of
the law.

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be 12
judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have 13
judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no
mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Faith and works.

What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man 14
say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith
save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and 15
destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto 16
them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled;
notwithstanding ye give them not those things
which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?
Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being 17

The faith of devils.

alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and 18
I have works: shew me thy faith without thy
works, and I will shew thee my faith by my
works. Thou believest that there is one God; 19
thou doest well: the devils also believe, and

Abraham and Rahab.

tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that 20
faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham 21
our father justified by works, when he had offered
Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith 22
wrought with his works, and by works was faith
made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled 23
which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was
imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was
called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by 24
works a man is justified, and not by faith only.
Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified 25
by works, when she had received the messengers,
and had sent *them* out another way? For as the 26

body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. **Chap. 2**

3 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that **The tongue.**
2 we shall receive the greater condemnation. For
in many things we offend all. If any man offend
not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able
3 also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put **Its power.**
bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us;
4 and we turn about their whole body. Behold also
the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are*
driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about
with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor
5 listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member,
and boasteth great things. Behold, how great **Its mischievousness.**
6 a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is*
a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among
our members, that it defileth the whole body, and
setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set
7 on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of **Not to be tamed.**
birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is
8 tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the
tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full
9 of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even **Fickle.**
the Father; and therewith curse we men, which
10 are made after the similitude of God. Out of the
same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.
11 My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth
a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water*
12 and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear
olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain
both yield salt water and fresh.

13 Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge **The true wisdom.**
among you? let him shew out of a good con-

Chap. 3

versation his works with meekness of wisdom. But 14
if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts,
glory not, and lie not against the truth. This 15
wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly,
sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife *is*, 16
there *is* confusion and every evil work. But the 17
wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy
and good fruits, without partiality, and without
hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown 18
in peace of them that make peace. From whence 4
come wars and fightings among you? *come they*
not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your
members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and 2
desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and
war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, 3
and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye
may consume *it* upon your lusts.

Unruly greed.

The world and God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that 4
the friendship of the world is enmity with God?
whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is
the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture 5
saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth
to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he 6
saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto
the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. 7
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw 8
nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse
your hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye*
double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and 9
weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning,
and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in 10
the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

God the rightful Master.

Chap. 4

The duty of brotherliness.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He
that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his
brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the
law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer
12 of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver,
who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou
that judgest another?

The uncertainty of life.

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we
will go into such a city, and continue there a year,
14 and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know
not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is*
your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for
15 a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that
ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and
16 do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your
17 boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to
him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not,
to him it is sin.

The doom of oppressors.

5 Go to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your
2 miseries that shall come upon *you*. Your riches
are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.
3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of
them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat
your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure
4 together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the
labourers who have reaped down your fields, which
is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries
of them which have reaped are entered into the
5 ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in
pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have
nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.
6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he
doth not resist you.

Chap. 5

Encouragement in patient endurance.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming 7
of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for
the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long
patience for it, until he receive the early and latter
rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for 8
the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge 9
not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned:
behold, the judge standeth before the
door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have 10
spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of
suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we 11
count them happy which endure. Ye have heard
of the patience of Job, and have seen the end
of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of
tender mercy.

Oaths.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, 12
neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by
any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and
your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Praise and prayer.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is 13
any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick 14
among you? let him call for the elders of the
church; and let them pray over him, anointing him
with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer 15
of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall
raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they
shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults one to 16
another, and pray one for another, that ye may be
healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous
man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to 17
like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly
that it might not rain: and it rained not on the
earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

The blessedness of converting sinners.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,
20 and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF
PETER

Chap. 1

Salutation.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers 1
scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the fore- 2
knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification
of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the
blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace,
be multiplied.

Doxology.

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord 3
Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant
mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by
the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to 4
an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and
that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
who are kept by the power of God through faith 5
unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The preciousness of salvation.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a 6
season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through
manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, 7
being much more precious than of gold that
perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be
found unto praise and honour and glory at the
appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, 8
ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet

believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full
9 of glory: receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

Salvation a mystery to prophets and angels.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the
11 grace *that should come* unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that
12 should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Be steadfast and consistent.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus
14 Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your igno-
15 rance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so
16 be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

The true life of the redeemed.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear:
18 forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your
19 fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as
20 of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for

Chap. 1

you, who by him do believe in God, that raised 21
him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that
your faith and hope might be in God.

Brotherly love in the new life.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the 22
truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the
brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure
heart fervently: being born again, not of corrup- 23
tible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,
which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* 24
as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of
grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof
falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth 25
for ever. And this is the word which by the
gospel is preached unto you. Wherefore laying **2**
aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and
envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, 2
desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may
grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the 3
Lord *is* gracious.

Christ the corner stone.

To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, dis- 4
allowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and*
precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a 5
spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up
spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus
Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the 6
scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone,
elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall
not be confounded. Unto you therefore which 7
believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be
disobedient, the stone which the builders dis-
allowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, 8
even to them which stumble at the word, being

The stone of stumbling.

disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. **Chap. 2**
9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **The royal priesthood.**
an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should
shew forth the praises of him who hath called you
10 out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in
time passed *were* not a people, but *are* now the
people of God: which had not obtained mercy,
but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and **Believers and unbelievers.**
pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war
12 against the soul; having your conversation honest
among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak
against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good
works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the
day of visitation.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for **Duty to authorities.**
the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as
14 supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that
are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers,
15 and for the praise of them that do well. For so is
the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to
16 silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and
not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness,
17 but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love
the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; **Slaves and their masters.**
not only to the good and gentle, but also to the
19 froward. For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for
conscience toward God endure grief, suffering
20 wrongfully. For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be
buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?
but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it
21 patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. For even

Chap. 2

Christ the example of patient endurance.

hereunto were ye called: because Christ also
suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye
should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither 22
was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was 23
reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he
threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that
judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins 24
in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead
to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose
stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep 25
going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd
and Bishop of your souls.

Wives and husbands.

Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own 3
husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also
may without the word be won by the conversation
of the wives; while they behold your chaste con- 2
versation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it 3
not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair,
and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;
but *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that 4
which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a
meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God
of great price. For after this manner in the old 5
time the holy women also, who trusted in God,
adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their
own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, 6
calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long
as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amaze-
ment. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* 7
according to knowledge, giving honour unto the
wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs
together of the grace of life; that your prayers be
not hindered.

Husbands and wives.

Chap. 3

Recapitulation.

8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be*
9 courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a
10 blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his
11 lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the
13 face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil. And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

Blessedness of suffering for Christ.

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye:* and be not afraid of their terror, neither be
15 troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you
16 with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good
17 conversation in Christ. For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for
18 evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

How to meet opposition.

Christ our example.

19 By which also he went and preached unto the
20 spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein
21 few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The

Christ and the spirits in prison.

Baptism.

Chap. 3

like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is 22
gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Suffering purifies.

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us 4
in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath
ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the 2
rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but
to the will of God. For the time past of *our* life 3
may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable
idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run 4
not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking
evil of *you*: who shall give account to him that is 5
ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for 6
this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Former sins to be abandoned.

The preaching to the dead.

Recapitulation.

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye 7
therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above 8
all things have fervent charity among yourselves:
for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use 9
hospitality one to another without grudging. As 10
every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the
manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him* 11
speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister,

let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Chap. 4

The duty of patient endurance.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some
13 strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be
14 glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye;* for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is
15 glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody
16 in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him
17 glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of
18 them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the
19 ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

The blessedness of suffering for Christ.

Be steadfast.

5 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall
2 be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready
3 mind; neither as being lords over *God's* heritage,

Elders.

Chap. 5

but being ensamples to the flock. And when the 4
chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a
crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the 5
elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another,
and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth
the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Concluding exhortation.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty 6
hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:
casting all your care upon him; for he careth for 7
you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary 8
the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking
whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the 9
faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us 10
unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye
have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish,
strengthen, settle *you*. To him *be* glory and dominion 11
for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing salutations.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as 12
I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and
testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein
ye stand. The *church that is* at Babylon, elected 13
together with *you*, saluteth you; and *so doth* Marcus
my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of 14
charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Christ
Jesus. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF

PETER

Chap. 1

Salutation.

1 SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and
2 our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

Be steadfast and consistent.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us
4 to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world
5 through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
6 and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance
7 patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness
8 charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus
9 Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that
10 he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the

Chap. 1 rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered 11 unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Reminiscences. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you 12 always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this 13 tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off *this* 14 my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye 15 may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

The Transfiguration. For we have not followed cunningly devised 16 fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from 17 God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, 18 when we were with him in the holy mount. We 19 have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing 20 this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came 21 not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

Prophecy.

The false teachers. But there were false prophets also among the 2

people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring
2 upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.
3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damna-
4 tion slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be
5 reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the
6 world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto
7 those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the
8 wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)
9 the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Chap. 2

Their doom.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Pre-
sumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid
11 to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing
12 accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken

Their character and conduct.

Chap. 2

and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they
understand not; and shall utterly perish in their
own corruption; and shall receive the reward of 13
unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to
riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes,
sporting themselves with their own deceivings while
they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, 14
and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable
souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous
practices; cursed children: which have forsaken 15
the right way, and are gone astray, following the
way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the
wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for 16
his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's
voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These 17
are wells without water, clouds that are carried
with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is
reserved for ever. For when they speak great 18
swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the
lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those
that were clean escaped from them who live in
error. While they promise them liberty, they 19
themselves are the servants of corruption: for of
whom a man is overcome, of the same is he
brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped 20
the pollutions of the world through the knowledge
of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are
again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter
end is worse with them than the beginning. For 21
it had been better for them not to have known the
way of righteousness, than, after they have known
it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered
unto them. But it is happened unto them accord- 22

Their bad influence.

The doom of backsliders.

ing to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his
own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to
her wallowing in the mire.

Chap. 3

Motive for writing.

3 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto
you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by
2 way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of
the words which were spoken before by the holy
prophets, and of the commandment of us the
3 apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this
first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers,
4 walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is
the promise of his coming? for since the fathers
fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from

Answer to the 'mockers.'

5 the beginning of the creation. For this they
willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God
the heavens were of old, and the earth standing
6 out of the water and in the water: whereby the
world that then was, being overflowed with water,
7 perished: but the heavens and the earth, which
are now, by the same word are kept in store,
reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and

Delay of second coming.

8 perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not
ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the
Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as
9 one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his
promise, as some men count slackness; but is
longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should
10 perish, but that all should come to repentance. But
the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the
night; in the which the heavens shall pass away
with a great noise, and the elements shall melt
with fervent heat, the earth also and the works
that are therein shall be burned up.

Chap. 3

Practical application.

Seeing then *that* all these things shall be dis- 11
solved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in
all holy conversation and godliness, looking for 12
and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,
wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,
and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?
Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look 13
for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth
righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye 14
look for such things, be diligent that ye may be
found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.
And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* 15
salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also
according to the wisdom given unto him hath
written unto you; as also in all *his* epistles, speak- 16
ing in them of these things; in which are some
things hard to be understood, which they that are
unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the
other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye 17
therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things*
before, beware lest ye also, being led away with
the error of the wicked, fall from your own sted-
fastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge 18
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be*
glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Closing exhortation.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF
JOHN

Chap. 1

Purpose in writing.

1 THAT which was from the beginning, which we
have heard, which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked upon, and our hands have
2 handled, of the Word of life ; (for the life was
manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness,
and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with
3 the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) that
which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,
that ye also may have fellowship with us : and
truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his
4 Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto
you, that your joy may be full.

Light and darkness.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of
him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and
6 in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have
fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie,
7 and do not the truth : but if we walk in the light,
as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with
another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son
cleanseth us from all sin.

All are sinners.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive
9 ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess

Chap. 1

our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our*
sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
If we say that we have not sinned, we make him 10

Christ our advocate.

a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, **2**
these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.
And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the
Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the 2
propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only,
but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

A consistent life shews that we are 'in Christ.'

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we 3
keep his commandments. He that saith, I know 4
him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar,
and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth 5
his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected:
hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith 6
he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk,

The new-old commandment.

even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new com- 7
mandment unto you, but an old commandment
which ye had from the beginning. The old com-
mandment is the word which ye have heard from the
beginning. Again, a new commandment I write 8
unto you: which thing is true in him and in you:
because the darkness is past, and the true light
now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, 9
and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until
now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the 10
light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in
him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, 11
and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither
he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his
eyes.

To children, young men, fathers.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins 12
are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto 13

you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is*
from the beginning. I write unto you, young men,
because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write
unto you, little children, because ye have known the
14 Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because
ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I
have written unto you, young men, because ye are
strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and
ye have overcome the wicked one.

The world and the Father.

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in
the world. If any man love the world, the love of
16 the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the
world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,
and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of
17 the world. And the world passeth away, and the
lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God
abideth for ever.

The antichrists.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have
heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there
many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the
19 last time. They went out from us, but they were
not of us; for if they had been of us, they would
no doubt have continued with us: but *they went
out*, that they might be made manifest that they
20 were not all of us. But ye have an unction from
21 the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have
not written unto you because ye know not the truth,
but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the
22 truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus
is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the
23 Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son,
the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that
24 acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* Let

How the antichrist is known.

Chap. 2

The teaching of the Spirit.

that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this 25 is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life. These *things* have I written unto you 26 concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing 27 which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, 28 abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

The children of God.

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that 29 every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath 3 bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the 2 sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth 3 himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth 4 sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was 5 manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: 6 whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive 7 you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even

The Christian does not live in sin.

Chap. 3

8 as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of
the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.
For this purpose the Son of God was manifested,
that he might destroy the works of the devil.
9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;
for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin,
10 because he is born of God. In this the children
of God are manifest, and the children of the
devil:

Mutual love the mark of the children of God.

Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of
11 God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For
this is the message that ye heard from the beginning,
12 that we should love one another. Not
as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his
brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because
his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Love and hatred.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.
14 We know that we have passed from death unto life,
because we love the brethren. He that loveth not
15 *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth
his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no
16 murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby
perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down
his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives
17 for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's
goods, and seeth his brother have need, and
shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him,
18 how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little
children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue;

How we may know that we are in Him.

19 but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know
that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts
20 before him. For if our hearts condemn us, God
is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Chap. 3 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have 21
we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we 22
ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing
in his sight. And this is his commandment, That 23
we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his command- 24
ments dwelleth in him, and he in him.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by
The false prophets. the Spirit which he hath given us. Beloved, believe 4
not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out
into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God: 2
Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is
come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that 3
confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome 4
them: because greater is he that is in you, than
he that is in the world. They are of the world: 5
therefore speak they of the world, and the world
heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth 6
God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Love the token of sonship. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of 7
God; and every one that loveth is born of God,
and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth 8
not God; for God is love. In this was manifested 9
the love of God toward us, because that God sent

his only begotten Son into the world, that we might
10 live through him. Herein is love, not that we
loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son
11 *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God
so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love
one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is
perfected in us.

Signs that we are in him.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he
14 in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And
we have seen and do testify that the Father sent
15 the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. Whosoever
shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God
dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that
God hath to us. God is love; and he that
dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have
boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is,
18 so are we in this world. There is no fear in love;
but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear
hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect
19 in love. We love him, because he first loved us.
20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother,
he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother
whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom
21 he hath not seen? And this commandment have
we from him, That he who loveth God love his
brother also.

Love to God and man casts out fear.

5 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is
born of God: and every one that loveth him that
2 begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By
this we know that we love the children of God,

Love, obedience, and faith, signs of sonship.

Chap. 5 when we love God, and keep his commandments.
For this is the love of God, that we keep his 3
commandments: and his commandments are not
grievous. For whatsoever is born of God over- 4
cometh the world: and this is the victory that
overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he 5
that overcometh the world, but he that believeth
that Jesus is the Son of God?

The three witnesses. This is he that came by water and blood, *even* 6
Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and
blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness,
because the Spirit is truth. For there are three 7
that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word,
and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.
And there are three that bear witness in earth, the 8
spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these
three agree in one. If we receive the witness of 9
men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the
witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.
He that believeth on the Son of God hath the 10
witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath
made him a liar; because he believeth not the
record that God gave of his Son. And this is the 11
record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and
this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath 12
life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not
life. These things have I written unto you that 13
believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye
may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may
believe on the name of the Son of God. And this 14
is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we
ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, 15

Inter-cessory prayer.

we know that we have the petitions that we desired
of him.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is*
not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him
life for them that sin not unto death. There is
a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray
17 for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is
a sin not unto death.

Concluding summary.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth
not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth
himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.
19 *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole
world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and
hath given us an understanding, that we may know
him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even*
in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God,
and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

JOHN

Salutation.

THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, 1
whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also
all they that have known the truth; for the truth's 2
sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us
for ever. Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace, 3
from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus
Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Warning against false teachers.

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children 4
walking in truth, as we have received a command-
ment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, 5
lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment
unto thee, but that which we had from the begin-
ning, that we love one another. And this is love, 6
that we walk after his commandments. This is
the commandment, That, as ye have heard from
the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many 7
deceivers are entered into the world, who confess
not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This
is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, 8
that we lose not those things which we have
wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Who- 9
soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine
of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the

doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the
10 Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not
this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house,
11 neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth
him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Conclusion.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would
not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come
unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may
13 be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee.
Amen.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

JOHN

Salutation.

THE elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom [1]
I love in the truth.

Commendation.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest [2]
prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren [3]
came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even
as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater [4]
joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

In praise of hospitality.

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou [5]
doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have [6]
borne witness of thy charity before the church:
whom if thou bring forward on their journey after
a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for [7]
his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing
of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive [8]
such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

Denunciation of Diotrephes.

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who [9]
loveth to have the preeminence among them,
receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will [10]
remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against
us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren,
and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them*

11 out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which
is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth
good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not
12 seen God. Demetrius hath good report of all *men*,
and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record;
and ye know that our record is true.

Demetrius commended.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with
14 ink and pen write unto thee: but I trust I shall
shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.
Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet
the friends by name.

Conclusion.

beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers 18 in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate them- 19 selves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Application. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on 20 your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the 21 mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: 22 and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the 23 fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Doxology. Now unto him that is able to keep you from 24 falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the 25 only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

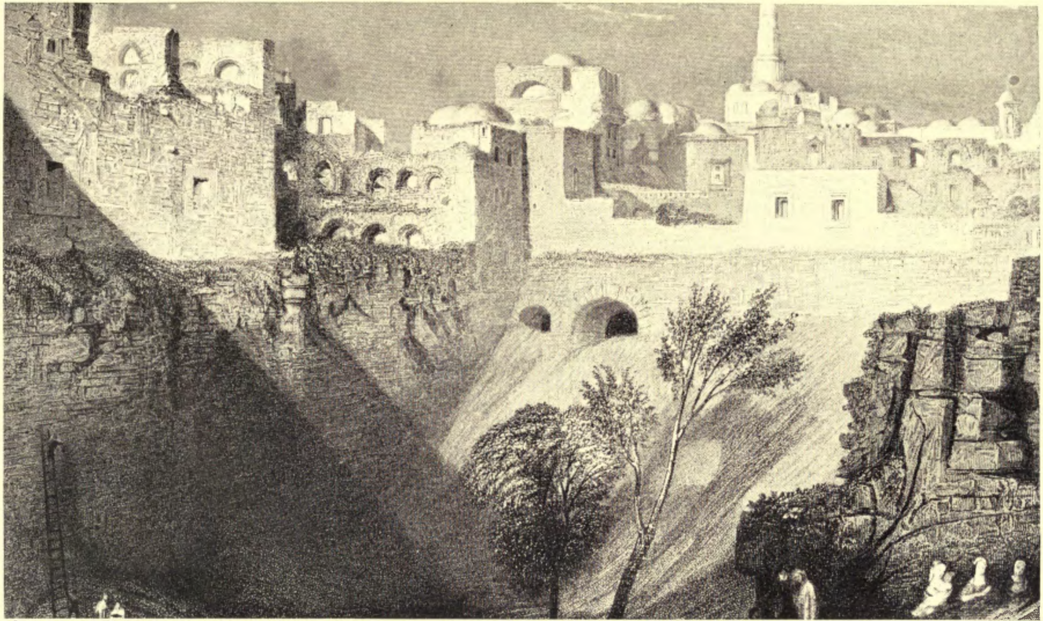
THE GENERAL EPISTLES

JAMES; I, II PETER; I—III JOHN

AND

JUDE

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS



Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

VIEW IN JERUSALEM

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

JAMES

JAMES, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1

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i. 1. *Salutation.*

1. James: the brother of the Lord; see Introduction, pp. 12 f., and Jude 1. The Greek is *Iakobos*; the Old Testament, 'Jacob.'

servant: *lit.* 'slave,' emphasizing the supreme and absolute authority of the master and the entire submission of the slave. At the same time slavery, in the N. T. period, was universally recognized as a legitimate institution; slaves were often men of skill or culture; so that the word 'slave' did not suggest as humiliating a degree of personal degradation as it does now.

servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. A unique phrase; the closest parallel is Titus i. 1, 'Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ.' The only other opening verses of N. T. Epistles in which the writers announce themselves simply as 'slaves' are Phil. i. 1 and Jude 1. In Rom. i. 1 and 2 Pet. i. 1, 'apostle' is added to 'slave.' See further on 1 Pet. i. 1.

Jesus Christ. In the Gospels our Lord is usually spoken of by his personal name, 'Jesus'; while 'Christ' is purely a title, the Anointed One, or Messiah, the promised deliverer of Israel and of the world. In the Epistles and in Revelation this name is comparatively rare, and its place is usually taken by 'Jesus Christ,' or by 'Christ,' which tends to become a purely personal name. Acts uses 'Jesus,' 'Christ,' or 'Jesus Christ.' In the Pauline Epistles, 'Christ Jesus' is also used occasionally[1]. Prof. Sanday, &c., on Rom. i. 1, draw the following distinction: 'In *Christ Jesus* the first word would seem to be rather more distinctly a proper name than in *Jesus Christ*,' in which '*Christ* to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

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[1] In Acts xix. 4; Heb. iii. 1; 1 Pet. v. 10, 14; the A. V., following an inferior text, has substituted 'Christ Jesus' for 'Jesus' or 'Christ.'

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into mani-
3 fold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith

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would seem to have a little of its sense as a title still clinging to it.'

the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion. Either literally, the Jewish Christians scattered abroad, as Prof. J. B. Mayor, &c. (cf. on 'Abraham our Father' in ii. 21); or a figurative term for Christians generally, like 'the Israel of God,' Gal. vi. 16. Cf. Introduction, p. 24; 1 Pet. i. 1; and Introduction to 1 Peter, p. 44.

the twelve tribes. The Jews, though mainly of the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, included families from the other tribes, e. g. Anna (Luke ii. 36) was of the tribe of Asher. But the Jews claimed to be 'the twelve tribes' as being ecclesiastically the exclusive representatives of the ancient Israel. In Acts xxvi. 7 Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, speaks of 'our twelve tribes.'

greeting: a classical form of salutation, only found elsewhere in the N. T. in Acts xv. 23, the letter from the church at Jerusalem to the Christians of Antioch, &c., probably actually written by James, and in Acts xxiii. 26, the letter of Lysias to Felix.

i. 2–4. *Duty of cheerful endurance.*

Let trials be met cheerfully, so that they may confirm and perfect Christian character.

2. Count it all joy, &c. Cf. Rom. v. 2–6; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, iv. 13, and more generally 1 Pet. i. 3–12, ii. 18–25, iii. 13–22, iv. 12, 13, where the idea of this verse is expanded and interpreted. Cf. Introduction to 1 Peter, p. 45.

manifold temptations: also in 1 Pet. i. 6, and 'manifold' in 1 Pet. iv. 10, which see. 'Manifold[1]' is strictly 'many-coloured,' 'variegated,' and refers not to the number, but to the variety of their trials.

temptations[2]: R. V. marg., 'trials'; a word almost wholly confined to the LXX and N. T., and commentaries upon them. It comes from a verb meaning 'to try' or 'test,' and is strictly a testing or test of character, which, when applied by ill-disposed persons, takes the form of an incitement to wrong-doing. It is the word used for 'temptation' in the Lord's Prayer and the narrative of the Temptation; but here and in 1 Pet. i. 6 it becomes, like our 'trial,' afflictions regarded as a test of character.

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[1] *ποικίλος.* [2] *πειρασμοῖς.*

worketh patience. And let patience have *its* perfect work, 4
that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, 5
who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it
shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing 6
doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the
sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that 7

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3. proof: 'process of testing'; only elsewhere in the N.T., 1 Pet. i. 7.

patience. See on 2 Pet. i. 6.

4. have its **perfect work:** 'have full scope,' i.e. persist in endurance so long as there is any necessity for it, until it has accomplished all that it can accomplish.

perfect[1]**:** mature, full-grown. Cf. Eph. iv. 13, 'till we all attain unto . . . a fullgrown[1] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

entire[2]**:** complete in all its parts; or, as James himself puts it, **lacking in nothing.** Only elsewhere in the N.T., 1 Thess. v. 23.

i. 5-8. *Wisdom to be sought in single-minded faith.*

In order that you may be capable of the persistent and cheerful endurance that makes trial a blessed discipline, seek wisdom from God with undivided desire and confidence, the essential condition of effectual faith—or, indeed, of any measure of consistency and success in life.

5. lacketh wisdom. Endurance of itself would not supply this, nor yet attain to its perfect work without wisdom (cf. Wisd. of Sol. ix. 6, 'For even if a man be perfect[1] among the sons of men, yet if the wisdom that cometh from thee be not with him, he shall be held in no account.'

liberally: *lit.* 'simply[3]'; so here perhaps 'unconditionally.'

upbraideth not. Cf. Ecclus. xli. 22, 'After thou hast given, upbraid not.'

7. that man: he that doubteth.

7, 8. let not that man think that he shall receive . . .; a doubleminded man, &c.: R.V. marg., slightly altering the punctuation of the Greek, 'That a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways, shall receive anything,' &c. The A.V. places a full stop after 'Lord,' and makes verse 8 a separate sentence, 'A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.' These variations hardly affect the sense.

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[1] *τέλειος.* [2] *ὁλόκληρος.* [3] *ἁπλῶς.*

man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord;
8 a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.
9 But let the brother of low degree glory in his high
10 estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because
11 as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the
sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the
grass: and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the

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8. doubleminded. Only elsewhere in the N. T. in iv. 8; the word[1] first occurs in literature in Christian writings. The *Shepherd of Hermas* (see Introduction, pp. 16 f.) has much to say about 'double-mindedness.' For the sense cf. our phrase, 'To be in two minds about anything.'

i. 9–11. *Motives for endurance.*

Let the poor Christian find a motive for cheerful endurance in the thought of his high estate as a child of God; and let the wealthy Christian rejoice to suffer loss for Christ's sake, because earthly riches and distinction speedily perish.

9. low degree: humble station in life.

high estate: as a Christian.

10. the rich Christian, who would be a special mark for persecutors, and would have much to lose by persecution. Some scholars on account of the disparagement of the 'rich' in ii. 6, 7, v. 1–6, suppose that the rich heathen are meant, and take the construction somewhat differently, e. g. 'the rich man glories in that which is really his humiliation,' v. 2, 3. But this view is improbable.

in that he is made low. Not, as some take it, in that he has learnt humility; but in the humiliation, the being brought, through persecution, to the 'low degree' of his poorer brethren.

10, 11. as the flower of the grass . . . perisheth. An expansion of Isa. xl. 6, 7; also quoted in 1 Pet. i. 24, which see.

10. flower of the grass: in the Hebrew, 'flower of the field.' The LXX, which James follows, perhaps intended this phrase to mean 'the flowers found among the grass'; or they may have given what they supposed to be a literal rendering of the Hebrew without troubling themselves to think what it meant.

11. the scorching wind: the *Sirocco*, springing up at sunrise; A. V., less probably, 'with its burning heat.'

the grace of the fashion of it: *lit.* 'the grace of its countenance,' its beauty of form and colour.

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[1] δίψυχος.

fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when 12
he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of
life, which *the Lord* promised to them that love him.
Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of 13

---

fade away: but according to 1 Pet. i. 4, v. 4, the Christian inheritance and crown of glory do not 'fade away.'

goings. Only elsewhere in the N. T., Luke xiii. 22, in the sense of 'journey'; it is sometimes taken in this literal sense here, of the journeyings of merchants. This seems awkward. In the O. T. a man's 'steps' or 'goings' are often a figure for the course and conduct of his life, e. g. Ps. xvii. 5, 'My steps have held fast to thy paths'; cf. also the phrase 'going out and coming in,' Isa. xxxvii. 28; so probably here.

i. 12. *Reward of endurance.*

Endurance will be rewarded with the promised crown of life.

12. Blessed: *lit.* 'happy,' the word used in the Beatitudes.

the man: whether of high or low degree. For the opening clause of this verse cf. Dan. xii. 12.

when he hath been approved: A. V., 'when he is tried.' The Greek, as often happens when the A. V. and R. V. differ, includes the meaning of both, 'when he has been tried, and the trial has proved him to be steadfast in his loyalty.'

the crown of life. The same phrase occurs in Rev. ii. 10. This 'crown' (cf. on 1 Pet. v. 4) is the victor's wreath which the Christian receives when, by God's grace, he has conquered temptation and won his way into life. We read also of 'crowns' of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8, and glory, 1 Pet. v. 4.

which the Lord **promised.** 'The Lord,' as the italics of the R. V. shew, is not expressed in the Greek, but is clearly required by the context. Hence the insertion of the words in the text by the MSS. followed by the A. V. The 'promise' may have been some unrecorded utterance of our Lord as to the 'crown of life,' or the reference may be to the general promise of life to believers.

i. 13-15. *Source of temptation.*

Let no one be seduced from loyal constancy by the quibble that God is the source of temptation. Temptation arises from a man's own evil inclinations; to yield is sin, and the consequence of sin is death.

13. I am tempted of God: a natural conclusion from such O. T. passages as 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, and from a mistaken application

God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he
14 himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted,
when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.
15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and

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of the doctrine of Divine sovereignty. Cf. the objection cited by Paul in Rom. ix. 19, 'Why doth he still find fault? For who withstandeth his will?' and the apostle's answer in the following verses.

God cannot be tempted with evil. 'Cannot be tempted' is a single word in the Greek[1]. This word only occurs here in the N. T.; it is unusual in Greek literature generally, and its meaning is matter of controversy. The most probable rendering is that common to the A. V. and to the R. V. text, on which we are commenting. Another translation is that of the R. V. margin, 'God is untried in evil,' i. e. 'has no experience of evil, does not know from His own experience what it is to feel or follow the promptings of an evil nature.' Either view give the same general sense. It is absurd to think of God as tempting men, in the sense of trying to induce them to do evil, because such tempting on His part would imply that He took pleasure in evil. So far from that, He is either (according to the view taken) unversed in evil, or cannot even feel in the suggestion of evil any temptation; how then can He take an active delight in trying to bring about evil?

he himself tempteth no man. Suffering and other external circumstances which incite to or suggest evil courses may be ordained of God, but His purpose is not to lead men into evil conduct, but to discipline them in constancy and faith.

14. each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. R. V. marg., to much the same effect, 'each man is tempted by his own lust, being drawn away by it, and enticed.' 'Lust' is any inclination—here the inclination to any kind of evil; but the same word is used elsewhere in a perfectly neutral sense. It is the inner inclination to evil, eager to avail itself of the external opportunity, which constitutes temptation.

15. lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin. There is no sin in the mere desire for gain or enjoyment, which may suggest an evil impulse, but there is sin when this desire leads to wrong action. The exposition of these verses has been based upon the view that 'lust,' or rather 'desire,' is used here in a bad sense as inclination to evil. If so, the treatment of the subject is not exhaustive. In many temptations, the suggestion or impulse

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[1] *ἀπείραστος.*

the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death. Be not 16
deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every 17
perfect boon is from above, coming down from the
Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither

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arises from an innocent desire for advantages, lawful in themselves, but only to be obtained, in the special circumstances, by wrong-doing. The desire to provide for a family may prompt a man to avail himself of opportunities of making unfair profits. If the man yields, it is not through any positive inclination to evil, but through the lack of loyalty to righteousness. Such cases do not seem to be in the Apostle's mind.

beareth . . . bringeth forth: two different words in the original; hence the A. V. 'bringeth forth . . . bringeth forth' is misleading.

fullgrown: not as A. V., 'finished.' The sin, the child of uncontrolled desire, grows up, and in its turn has a child—death.

i. 16–18. *God the source of good only.*

But we need not confine ourselves to the mere negative statement that God is not the source of so evil a thing as prompting to sin; positively, He is the unchanging source of good, so that only that which is good can come from Him. We are His spiritual children in the gospel, not that we may be seduced from it by temptation, but that it may spread from us throughout the world.

16. Be not deceived by such ideas as that cited in 13^{a}; A. V., less accurately, 'do not err.'

17. Every good gift and every perfect boon. The Greek has the metre of a line of poetry, probably by accident.

gift . . . boon: two different words; A. V., 'gift . . . gift.'

the Father of lights: the creator of sun, moon, and stars, and so the ultimate source of physical light; suggesting also that God is the source of intellectual and spiritual illumination (cf. 1 John i. 5, 'God is light'). An ancient Jewish benediction runs, 'Blessed be the Lord our God who hath formed the lights.'

can be: A. V., less probably, 'is.'

variation: A. V., 'variableness.' The Greek word[1] (only here in the N. T.) is very similar to our 'parallax,' and has sometimes been supposed to be, like it, a technical astronomical term, but it is rather to be taken in a general sense. The sun and moon have 'variations' which leave us in darkness; the Divine light never wanes, or sets, or is eclipsed.

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[1] παραλλαγή.

18 shadow that is cast by turning. Of his own will he brought
us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind
of firstfruits of his creatures.
19 Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man

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shadow that is cast by turning. The meaning of the original[1] is uncertain. In considering the phrase we must, of course, dismiss from our minds our modern knowledge of astronomy, e. g. of the revolution of the earth on its axis, and its motion through an orbit round the sun. 'Shadow cast by turning' could only mean to the readers the darkness in which the earth is plunged by the diurnal revolution[2] or 'turning' of the sun and moon round the earth—a special instance of 'variation.' The phrase, however, is not an apt expression of the idea.

The A. V., 'shadow of turning,' takes the word 'shadow' figuratively, like our 'ghost,' in 'not a ghost of a chance'; but 'shadow' would hardly be so used when contrasted with light. Other explanations are 'shadow caused by change' or 'changing shadow,' either of which would be a possible rendering of the Greek, and would make very good sense. Two Old Latin versions render 'particle' or 'moment of shadow,' which may represent a Greek phrase[3] differing very slightly from that found in the extant MSS. and translated by our versions. 'Shadow' is a very rare word, only used here in the N. T.

18. brought us forth: therefore, according to our usual phrase, 'Our Father'; but the term, which was suggested by verse 15, belongs to the mother. On the ground of this and other passages (Deut. xxxii. 18; Isa. lxvi. 13, &c.) a doctrine of the Divine motherhood has been based. This idea is said to have taken a strong hold of Chinese Christians. It is not likely that any of the inspired writers intended to formulate such a doctrine, even if it is implied by their language. This 'bringing forth' is a figure for conversion to Christianity.

the word of truth: the gospel.

firstfruits of his creatures: not the privileged recipients of a special favour, but the first sheaves of a world-wide harvest of redeemed souls. Cf. Exod. xxii. 29 ff.

creatures. This comprehensive term may extend even beyond humanity (cf. Rom. viii. 19-22).

i. 19-21. *Be meek and docile.*

In order that you may not fall through temptation, but may be examples and pioneers of faith, seek to be meek hearers

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[1] *τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα.* Sinaitic MS. *ἀποσκιάσματος.*

[2] Which we know to be only apparent.

[3] *ῥοπὴ ἀποσκιάσματος.*

be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the 20
wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of 21
wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word,

of the gospel of salvation rather than to manifest a hasty temper in foul-mouthed abuse.

19. Ye know this: viz. what has been stated in the previous paragraph. Their knowledge is the ground of the appeal that follows. R. V. marg., 'Know ye'; A. V., following inferior MSS., 'Wherefore.'

swift to hear: i. e. to hear Christian teaching (cf. verses 21, 22). Cf. Ecclus. v. 13[1].

slow to speak, slow to wrath. These words strike the key-note of much of the Epistle. Chap. iii. shews that those addressed were afflicted by a *cacoëthes loquendi*, an eagerness to speak in the Christian gatherings, which often degenerated into angry abuse. Let them therefore be ready to learn rather than eager to teach; and let them not lose their tempers because others differ from them as to doctrine or practice.

20. the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Those admonished would have justified themselves by saying that they were angry on account of false teaching and unworthy habits. The Apostle anticipates this plea by reminding them that an evil temper neither commends sound doctrine nor promotes holy living.

21. putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness. 'Putting away,' i. e. stripping off clothing. 'Filthiness,' only here in the N. T.; the corresponding adjective, 'filthy,' is used in ii. 2 (R. V., 'vile clothing'). The noun sometimes has the figurative sense of 'meanness,' like our 'shabbiness.' For 'wickedness' we should probably adopt the R. V. marg., 'malice'; the Greek word[2] started with a perfectly general meaning of 'evil,' but often became specialized like our 'ill-nature,' a sense which suits the context here and in the parallel passage (1 Pet. ii. 1). 'Filthiness and overflowing of malice' may express a single compound idea—'disgusting and excessive malignity.' The reference may be general, but more probably refers specially to the intemperate spitefulness of the discussions and party squabbles of the churches. Even if 'filthiness' is taken literally, it can be abundantly illustrated from the history of religious controversy in the first six centuries of the church and at the Reformation.

implanted: or, as R. V. marg., 'inborn,' not as A. V., 'en-

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[1] Hühn, *A. T. Cit.* p. 119.

[2] *κακία.*

22 which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of
the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.
23 For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he
is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror:
24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway
25 forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that
looketh into the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and *so* con-

grafted'; the word only occurs here in the N. T. The gospel is a new life planted or born in the soul.

i. 22-25. *Hearing useless without doing.*

But however desirable it may be to hear the truth, hearing is useless unless it leads us to apply the teaching we receive to practical life. Hearing without doing is as trivial and fruitless as a casual glance at oneself in a looking-glass; blessing only follows active obedience.

22. be ye: strictly, 'become'; they had not attained to any large degree of this grace. He who listens in a spirit of angry criticism, eager to vent itself in hot words, is not likely to apply the measure of the truth there may be in what he hears. Cf. Matt. vii. 21-27; Rom. ii. 13.

23. his natural face. R.V. marg. gives, as the literal rendering of the Greek, 'the face of his birth.' The phrase is unique and obscure; no one has clearly shewn what point James intended to make by speaking of the man's face as that 'of his birth.' The word for 'birth[1]' is translated by the R.V. 'generation' or 'genealogy' in Matt. i. 1; 'birth' or 'generation' in Matt. i. 18; 'birth' in Luke i. 14. In Jas. iii. 6, in another very obscure phrase, 'wheel of *genesis*,' it is translated 'nature' or 'birth.' These are the only places where the word occurs in the N.T. The meaning perhaps is 'the face a man is born with, with all its natural defects.' Prof. Mayor, however, explains *genesis* as 'fleeting earthly existence,' and makes the phrase mean 'the face which belongs to this transitory life' contrasted with 'the character which is being here moulded for eternity.'

24. beholdeth . . . goeth away . . . forgetteth: a trivial and transient episode, due to a casual impulse, leaving no permanent impression, and having no practical results.

25. he that looketh into the perfect law, . . . so **continueth, . . . not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh.** The law (see next note) is regarded as a mirror, with, as it were, magic properties. Looking into it, a man sees not only his actual

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[1] *γένεσις.*

tinueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that
worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. If any 26
man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth
not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion
is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before our God and 27
Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their
affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

self with all its defects, but the ideal of Christian manhood. Studying the vision, and seeking to realize the ideal, he attains to blessing. Cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

looketh into: *lit.* 'bends over,' 'stoops down,' to look closely and carefully; used in John xx. 5 of John stooping to look into the empty sepulchre; also in 1 Pet. i. 12.

the perfect law, the law **of liberty.** The O. T. could speak of the Mosaic law as perfect in its time (Ps. xix. 7), but that had now become obsolete (Heb. viii. 13); and the only law which was perfect, which fully met the needs and opportunities of the new era, was the law of Christ, the 'new covenant' announced in Jer. xxxi. 31–34: cf. Heb. viii. 7–13. This new law, as Paul often insists (Rom. viii. 2, &c.), is the law of Christ, the spontaneous obedience of the believer to the suggestions of the Spirit, in contrast to the 'law of ordinances,' which constrained and coerced by innumerable rules. Cf. ii. 8, 12.

i. 26, 27. *Acceptable religious observances.*

Though the law is a law of liberty, there remain external standards by which a man may know whether he is really obedient. One test is his behaviour to his fellows—courteous, kindly, and truthful speech; care for the needy; abstinence from the evil doings of the ungodly.

26. thinketh himself to be: R. V. marg., 'seemeth to be,' so A. V.

religious . . . religion[1]. These words may be best defined in the words of Trench[2]: 'We have in "religious . . .," the zealous and diligent performer of the divine offices, of the outward service of God . . . "Religion" is predominantly the ceremonial service of religion, the external forms or body, of which "godliness[3]" is the informing soul.' 'Religion' here is not the inner life, but the external manifestation. There is still a contrast with the Jewish law. The 'Divine offices' of the Christian faith are not ceremonies of worship, but the acts of a Christlike life.

27. unspotted: also 1 Pet. i. 19; 2 Pet. iii. 14.

world. Here, as in 2 Pet. i. 4, ii. 20, and in John's writings,

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[1] *θρῆσκος, θοησκεία.* [2] *Synonyms*, 170. [3] *εὐσέβεια*; cf. 2 Pet. i. 3.

2 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus
2 Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. For
if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring,
in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in
3 vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the
fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place;
and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit

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the world (*kosmos*), apart from and opposed to Christ; the sphere in which life is purely selfish.

ii. 1–4. *Respect of persons.*

Shew equal honour to rich and poor; for instance, you shew a mean spirit if you put a poor man into an inferior seat in your meetings for public worship.

1. hold not the faith . . . with respect of persons, i. e. do not let your new life derived from Christ be interfered with by anxiety to conciliate the rich man at the expense of the poor. R. V. marg., 'do ye, in accepting persons, hold the faith?' i. e. 'If ye do this, are you really Christians?'

the Lord **of glory.** There is much controversy as to the exact connexion of the words 'of glory,' the details of which would require more space than can be spared for a comparatively unimportant point. An interesting alternative to the R. V. is the suggestion that we should translate 'Jesus Christ, who is the glory.' 'Glory[1]' is sometimes used for the term 'Shekinah' used by the Jews for the manifestation of God.

2. synagogue: usually, in the N. T., of the buildings in which the Jews met for worship. In Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9, societies of Jews are spoken of as 'synagogues of Satan'; in Heb. x. 25, a compound[2] of this word is translated 'the assembling . . . together.' In the LXX, 'synagogue[3]' is the regular translation of the two Hebrew words for 'assembly' or 'congregation,' one of which is also often rendered *ecclesia.* In classical Greek the word means 'bringing together,' 'assembling.' If the Epistle is very early, the 'synagogue' here may be the Jewish building, which Jewish Christians still frequented; at a later time the name of the Jewish building might perhaps be used for the place of Christian worship; but the word is best taken with R. V. marg. as 'assembly.'

a man with a gold ring . . . a poor man: both strangers. James fears lest the Christians shew an unseemly eagerness to attract rich outsiders.

vile. Cf. on i. 21. Rather, 'shabby,' 'worn and stained.'

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[1] δόξα.

[2] ἐπισυναγωγή.

[3] i. e. συναγωγή.

under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own 4
mind, and become judges with evil thoughts? Hearken, 5
my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that
are poor as to the world *to be* rich in faith, and heirs of
the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?
But ye have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the 6

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3. sit under my footstool: rather, 'sit down by my footstool,' i. e. on the ground.

4. are ye not divided in your own mind? divided between the Christian duty of regarding all alike as brethren (Gal. iii. 28), and the interested desire to associate with wealthy people—'doubleminded,' i. 8. R. V. marg., 'Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves?' This, however, would imply that the two men were members of the church. A.V., 'Are ye not then partial in yourselves?' an improbable rendering of the Greek. Another translation is 'Do ye not doubt[1]?' i. e. 'Can you really believe, if you act thus?' Cf. on ii. 1.

are ye not . . . become judges with evil thoughts? Their action implied a judgement as to the relative worth of the two men. This was wrong, because the men were strangers, of whom too little was known to warrant any such judging. Moreover, they judged 'with evil thoughts' on the principle that the costliness of a man's dress shewed that he was a desirable associate. The A.V., 'judges of evil thoughts,' was probably intended to convey the same meaning.

ii. 5-7. *Rich and poor, and the church.*

This truckling to the rich at the expense of the poor is contrary to the example set by God, for He is specially gracious to the poor. Moreover, the men upon whom you are so ready to fawn persecute you and blaspheme Christ.

5. did not God choose them that are poor. James does not say that only the poor were chosen. In some books of the O. T., however, 'poor' and 'godly' are almost synonymous.

poor as to the world: i. e. in worldly wealth, and in the eyes of the world. A. V., following inferior MSS., 'the poor of this world,' which would have about the same meaning.

to be **rich in faith:** not (as A. V., 'the poor of this world, rich in faith') because they were rich in faith.

heirs of the kingdom. A unique phrase. An inheritance as a figure for the privileges of believers is an O. T. idea (Ezek. xliv. 28, &c.) frequently used by Paul (Rom. viii. 17, &c.);

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[1] The word used here is another form of the verb twice translated 'doubt' in i. 6.

rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the
7 judgement-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable
8 name by the which ye are called? Howbeit if ye fulfil
the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love
9 thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have
respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by
10 the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the
whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is become

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cf. 1 Pet. i. 4. 'Kingdom of God' and 'kingdom of heaven' were Christ's favourite terms for the new spiritual dispensation which he inaugurated.

6. Do not the rich oppress you? Our ignorance of the circumstances of those to whom this letter was addressed leaves it uncertain why the rich were specially zealous in persecution. At Jerusalem the Sadducees were hostile to Christianity on account of its doctrine of immortality, and they comprised many powerful officials and wealthy nobles.

7. they blaspheme the honourable name: of Christ. The prosecution of Christians would involve blasphemous slanders as to Christ and his teaching: cf. on 1 Pet. ii. 12.

ii. 8-13. *How to observe the law of liberty.*

Those who treat the poor man with contumely break the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' and thus become transgressors of the law, which is transgressed as a whole if one of its commands is disobeyed. Live according to that law of liberty by which you hope to be judged. Its judgement is most inexorable against the hard-hearted, but least severe to the compassionate.

8. the royal law: usually explained as the supreme law, the 'king of laws.' A similar phrase, however, in 2 Macc. iii. 13, means 'the commandments of the king,' which favours another view here, viz. 'the law of the king,' i. e. 'of Christ.' It seems possible that James, a Palestine Jew not greatly skilled in Greek idiom, may have meant 'the law of the kingdom.'

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: a quotation from Lev. xix. 18. Our Lord reckoned this as the second greatest commandment, inferior only to 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' &c., Mark xii. 28-32. According to Paul the whole law is fulfilled in this one commandment, Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 8-10.

9. convicted by the law: Lev. xix. 15, and implicitly by verse 8.

10. one point: e. g. the behaviour described in verses 2, 3.

guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, 11
said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by 12
a law of liberty. For judgement *is* without mercy to 13
him that hath shewed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgement.

What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath 14
faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? If 15
a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food,
and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed 16
and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful
to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have 17

guilty of all. Equivalent sayings are quoted from the Jewish Rabbis: cf. also Gal. v. 3. All sin is 'of a piece'; or, to use a technical term, there is a 'solidarity' of virtue and vice. One sinful act indicates a sinful disposition which will manifest itself in many other ways when there is convenient opportunity and adequate inducement.

12. a law of liberty: not, as A. V., 'the law of liberty.' Stress is laid on the character of the law. Cf. on i. 25.

13. mercy glorieth against judgement. 'Mercy' is not an exact equivalent of the original, which is a more comprehensive term, including 'lovingkindness and compassion.' God's compassion finds in man's kindliness to man an opportunity for setting aside triumphing over judgement. 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,' Matt. vi. 14.

ii. 14-17. *Faith and works.*

Faith that has no practical influence on conduct is as hollow a mockery as to bid the destitute be warmed and fed without giving them food and firing[1].

15. brother or sister: fellow Christians, whom a true believer would be specially bound to help (Gal. vi. 10).

naked: rather, 'poorly clad'; the real English equivalent in a similar passage would be 'in rags.'

daily. Not the word used in the Lord's Prayer.

17. faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Cf. the phrase 'dead works,' Heb. vi. 1, ix. 14.

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[1] On the relation of verses 14-26 to Paul's doctrine of faith, see general note following note on verse 26.

18 not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou
hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith apart
from *thy* works, and I by my works will shew thee *my*
19 faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well:
20 the devils also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou

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ii. 18, 19. *The faith of devils.*

Faith—even in the Divine unity—without works, is as barren as the faith of devils.

18. Yea, a man will say. The Apostle emphasizes his view by expressing it as the obvious criticism of 'the man in the street,' of the claim to possess faith made by any one who did not produce the fruits of faith. R. V. marg., 'But some one will say,' would suggest that the verse is an objection to James's view, and attempts have been made to interpret it on these lines, but with little success.

shew me thy faith apart from thy **works,** &c. A man's faith can only prove its existence and genuineness by producing right conduct. Obviously, in applying this principle, a man's conduct must be considered as a whole, and in relation to his circumstances; and regard must be had to the length of his Christian life, and to his character and habits at his conversion.

19. that God is one: A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'that there is one God.' The Jews insisted on this article of faith above all others. The *Shema*, the passage of Scripture which every pious Jew recited morning and evening, began 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one.' This monotheistic faith was one special ground for the Jews' claim to religious superiority over other peoples.

the devils: R. V. marg., '*Gr.* [*lit.*] demons[1].' Malevolent supernatural beings who played a very large part in ancient Eastern religions. They chiefly appear in the N. T. as 'possessing' unfortunate victims, but are also identified with heathen deities (1 Cor. x. 20-22).

believe. As supernatural beings, the devils are thought of as knowing that there is one supreme God, and therefore necessarily believing it. Similarly, they are described in the Gospels as having supernatural knowledge of the Divinity of Jesus (Mark v. 7).

shudder: A. V., 'tremble'; a testimony alike to the reality and the futility of their faith. The devils were a perfect illustration of the statement that faith without works was useless; they had a real and enlightened faith, if faith be mere intellectual conviction, together with an entire absence of 'works'; and the results were worthless for themselves and for everybody else.

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[1] *δαιμόνια.*

know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?
Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that 21
he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest 22

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ii. 20–26. *Abraham and Rahab.*

The Scripture examples of Abraham and Rahab cited to shew that faith does not set men right with God until it is expressed in a holy life. Faith without works is as dead as a body without a soul.

20. vain man: *lit.* 'empty,' i. e. when professing to be full. Cf. 'empty-headed,' 'wind-bag,' &c.

barren: futile; by etymology, 'without works,' i. e. results. A. V., with many ancient authorities, 'dead.'

21. Abraham our father: probably implying that those addressed are Jews (cf. Rom. iv. 1, 12); but he was also, according to Paul, the (spiritual) father of believing Gentiles (Rom. iv. 11, 16–18; Gal. iii. 7, 29).

justified. The word[1] translated 'justify' sometimes has the meaning 'make just'; but here, as constantly in the Pauline Epistles[2], it means 'account as righteous.' It represents a Hebrew word[3], which is generally used of a judge (actual or figurative) declaring that an accused person is innocent, i. e. acquitting him; or that a suitor has the law on his side, i. e. deciding in his favour. It was possible to 'justify the wicked for a reward' (Isa. v. 23), i. e. to take a bribe to acquit the guilty, or to decide against a suitor who had evidence and right on his side in the sight of the law. Hence James means that God will not acquit a man—treat him as innocent, liable to no penalty, but entitled to full rights of citizenship in the kingdom—merely because the man believes; his faith must be attested by his conduct.

by works. Whereas, according to Paul, 'We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law' (Rom. iii. 28; cf. Gal. ii. 16), of which Abraham is a special example (Rom. iv; Gal. iii). Paul appeals to Gen. xv. 6, 'He believed in Jehovah, and he counted it to him for righteousness (justification).' James probably had in mind Gen. xxii. 12, 'I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me'; and might have argued from it that though Abraham's faith had long been manifest, there was, according to Genesis, no clear evidence of his loyalty to God until the sacrifice of Isaac.

offered up. As far as Abraham's intention was concerned the offering was complete. Heb. xi. 17–19 cites the sacrifice of Isaac as an example of the faith of Abraham. Cf. verse 23.

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[1] *δικαιόω.*
[2] It does not occur in Hebrews.
[3] Hiçdîq.

that faith wrought with his works, and by works was
23 faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which
saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned
unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend
24 of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and
25 not only by faith. And in like manner was not also

22. Thou seest: A. V. and R. V. marg., 'Seest thou?'; the difference does not affect the sense.

faith wrought with his works. His faith was active, not so much intellectually in recognizing the truth of doctrine, but in practical obedience; it reinforced conscience and loyalty to God.

by works was faith made perfect. Faith, at first a mere seed, grew up, came to maturity, by exercising itself in practical obedience.

23. the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, &c. The sacrifice of Isaac was the supreme act which manifested the faith of Abraham. The quotation, as in Paul, follows the LXX of Gen. xv. 6 (R. V. of the Hebrew, 'he counted it to him'). The meaning of Gen. xv. 6 is that God regarded with approval Abraham's trust in Him, and accepted it as a sufficient ground for receiving him into His favour. Cf. Ps. cvi. 30, 31, 'Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgement, . . . and that was counted unto him for righteousness.'

and he was called the friend of God. So in the Hebrew—Isa. xli. 8, God being the speaker, 'Abraham, my friend'; LXX, 'Abraham whom I loved'; 2 Chron. xx. 7, God being addressed, 'Abraham thy friend'; LXX, 'thy beloved.' Philo[1], however, quotes Gen. xviii. 17 thus—'Shall I hide (this) from Abraham my friend?' This reading is not found in any other authority[2], but it was probably once current in some MSS. of the LXX; and Gen. xviii. 17 is probably the passage which James has in mind[3]. Clement of Rome and other early Fathers speak of Abraham as 'the friend of God.' The Greek philosophers use the phrase of the wise man, and Wisd. of Sol. vii. 27 of the holy man: cf. John xv. 14, 15. 'The friend of God' has become almost the name of Abraham amongst the Mohammedans. The king's 'Friend' was an official title at Eastern courts.

25. was not . . . Rahab . . . justified by works, in that she

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[1] *De Sobrietate,* 11.

[2] The Hebrew has simply 'from Abraham'; the LXX and Syriac, 'from Abraham my servant.'

[3] Ryle, *Philo and Holy Scripture,* in loco.

Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as 26
the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

received the messengers, &c. Cf. Joshua ii. 7. In Heb. xi. 31 this act is cited as shewing the faith of Rahab. Clement of Rome[1] states that Rahab 'was saved by faith and hospitality.'

26. as the body apart from the spirit is dead, &c. Death is shewn by absence of movement and by putrefaction; so faith, apart from practical holiness, shews no activity and becomes corrupt.

General Note on the Relation of ii. 14–26 to the Teaching of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

i. *There is a formal contradiction between the language of James and that of Paul and Hebrews.*

The parallels cited in the previous notes shew that according to Paul a man is justified by faith and not by works, whereas in James a man is justified by works and not by faith only. In Heb. xi. faith is described as the moving force of the consecrated activity and endurance of the saints. In Hebrews we read of 'dead works,' but in James of 'dead faith'; in Paul and Hebrews Abraham and Rahab are examples of 'faith,' in James of 'works.'

ii. *This contradiction is not accidental; it cannot have arisen out of the independent treatment of the subject by James on the one hand, and Paul and Hebrews on the other.*

This follows from the form of the statements; each writer not merely asserts his own view, but negatives contrary teaching, which he is anxious to refute.

iii. *The contradiction, however, was not between the apostles themselves, but between each of them, and teachers who inculcated a distorted form of the doctrine of the other.*

There is nothing in any of the Epistles concerned to suggest that either of the apostles had before him an Epistle or Epistles written by the other. In Galatians Paul enters into detail as to his relations with James; and if he had been controverting the arguments of a letter written by that Apostle, he would surely have mentioned the fact. Paul's polemic is obviously against the general Judaizing doctrine of the importance of works, and not against this particular passage. It is sometimes maintained[2] that salvation by faith was a familiar topic in the Rabbinical schools at the beginning of the Christian era, and that the Rabbinical treatment of the subject furnishes the connexion between Paul and James. Paul, it is suggested, adapted Rabbinical formulæ and arguments to the expression of Christian truth; but many Jews used the same phrases to express mistaken views, and it is this Jewish misuse of language which James attacks.

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[1] i. 12.

[2] Cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, pp. 158–164.

We cannot be certain, however, that the passages cited from the Mishna, &c., really represent the condition of Jewish thought in the time of the apostles. Moreover, it is maintained that the technical phrases, 'justification by faith,' &c., cannot be traced earlier than the Pauline Epistles, and were probably invented by Paul.

An alternative view of the relation between the teaching of the two apostles would be to suppose that James is attacking some such perversions of Pauline doctrine, as Paul himself denounces in Rom. vi. and Gal. ii. 17-21, v. 13-15.

The view maintained below that the contradiction is merely one of form would afford further evidence that James is not criticizing Romans or Galatians.

iv. *The contradiction is merely formal, while the teaching of James is consistent with that of Paul.*

It must be admitted that weighty authorities have held that the statements of the two apostles cannot be reconciled. For instance, the *Table Talk* reports that Luther said: 'Many have laboured and given themselves great trouble to reconcile the Epistle of James with Paul's teaching, as Melanchthon had, in treating of the subject in his *Apology*, but not very seriously, for the statements that faith justifies, and faith does not justify, are direct contraries. Whoever can make them chime together, to him will I give my doctor's cap and will stand reproved for a fool[1].'

Luther, however, did not sufficiently consider that words mean different things to different men. When we examine what each of the two apostles really meant, the contradiction disappears. 'Faith' to Paul was the attitude of personal trust and submission towards God; to James, an intellectual assent to a doctrine. The 'faith' of which the latter wrote was held by devils; but no one can read Romans and Galatians and imagine that the devils could 'believe' in the Pauline sense of the word. Then, in speaking of 'works,' Paul has in mind the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic ritual, while James is thinking of a holy and beneficent life. We come nearer to a real difference in the word 'justify,' because both use it in a very similar sense; yet even here the application is not the same. Paul is absorbed in the initial justification, the act by which man, estranged by sin, is set right with God; this is a justification, not by works, but by faith, by a man's new attitude towards God through the work of Christ. But this is quite consistent with James's justification by works, by

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[1] Cf. *Ind. Evgl. Rev.*, Jan., 1900.

Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we 3
shall receive heavier judgement. For in many things we 2
all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is
a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. Now if 3

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which he means that a right relation to God is maintained and fulfilled in a righteous life inspired by faith. Paul is thinking of the justification with which the Christian life begins, and the nomenclature of dogmatics has confined the use of the word to this initial act. But the Greek word could also be used for the vindication of the reality of Christian character through a consistent life, and it is so used by James[1].

iii. 1, 2. *The tongue.*

Do not be eager to teach others. It is difficult to control the tongue in ordinary life, a task in which only the very greatest saints succeed. For a teacher the task is still more difficult, the harm done by failure is more serious, and the responsibility proportionally greater.

1. Be not many teachers. iii. 1–iv. 12 expand and expound i. 19, 20. The necessity for the advice given here is shewn by 1 Cor. xiv. 20-33, from which we gather that the eagerness of the Christians to speak in public reduced their meetings to a perfect babel. The great Stoic philosopher Epictetus said similarly in answer to those who professed a desire to 'live as sages and do good to men,' 'What good? What wilt thou do? Hast thou done good to thyself? But thou wouldst exhort them? And hast thou exhorted thyself? Thou wouldst do them good—then do not chatter to them, but shew them in thyself what manner of men philosophy can make[2].' Cf. Portia's words in the *Merchant of Venice*[3]: 'I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than be one of the twenty to follow my own teaching.'

2. perfect, 'mature' (cf. i. 4). The control of the tongue being only attained at an advanced stage of the spiritual life, those addressed, who 'all stumble in many things,' have obviously not acquired this gift, and are not suited to be teachers. Their uncontrollable tongues would lead them into reckless statements and exhibitions of bad temper.

iii. 3, 4, 5 ^{a}. *Its power.*

The tongue controls the much larger body, just as a bridle guides a horse, or a rudder a ship.

3. Now if . . . we turn about: A. V., with inferior MSS., 'Behold . . . and we turn about.'

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[1] Cf. Garvie, *Rom., Cent. Bible*, p. 24.

[2] *Dissertations*, iii. 13 (Rolleston's translation).

[3] Act i, Sc. 2.

we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may
4 obey us, we turn about their whole body also. Behold,
the ships also, though they are so great, and are driven
by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small
rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth.
5 So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great
things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how
6 small a fire! And the tongue is a fire: the world of
iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth

mouths. Here, as in the case of a man's tongue, the whole body is governed by controlling the mouth. This part of the parallel is apparent only, and not real.

4. very small: in proportion to the size of the ships.

rudder . . . steersman: A. V., less accurately, 'helm . . . governor.' The rudder on an ancient ship was an oar or a paddle, working in a rowlock or port-hole. A ship had two of these, one on each side of the stern.

5 a. boasteth great things. The context implies that the boasting is justified; the tongue really controls men. 'Boast' is scarcely the word we should have expected; it is apparently used to suggest the undue self-assertion into which the tongue often betrays men.

iii. 5 b, 6. *Its mischievousness.*

A bridle and a rudder are figures of the great power exercised by so small a thing as the tongue; similarly, the widespread ruin often caused by a tiny spark illustrates the immense mischief constantly wrought by that little member.

5 b. how much wood: rather, as R. V. marg., 'how great a forest'; certainly not, as A. V., 'how great a matter.'

how small a fire! A. V., with inferior MSS., 'a little fire.'

6. The general sense of this verse is obviously that the little tongue does immense harm; but the language used is obscure and its exact meaning uncertain.

the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue. 'The world of iniquity' probably means 'the iniquitous world,' 'the wicked world.' The 'world[1]' is the evil element amongst mankind, and the tongue is the corresponding evil element in the body. It is largely occupied with causing, or suggesting, or speaking evil.

defileth the whole body. Cf. Mark vii. 22, 23, '. . . deceit,

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[1] *κόσμος*, see on i. 27.

the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature,
and is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beasts and 7
birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed,
and hath been tamed by mankind: but the tongue can 8

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lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.' The tongue is not only a chief instrument of such vices in its owner, but also the means by which he induces them in others.

setteth on fire. A figure for 'initiates the destruction of' or 'the evil working of.'

the wheel of nature[1]. A meaningless phrase to an English reader. R. V. marg., 'wheel of birth,' and A. V., 'course of nature,' are also obscure. The Greek is variously interpreted. Thus Prof. Mayor explains the phrase from 'the shape of the wheel . . . the circle or sphere of this earthly life, meaning all that is contained in our life'; and further seems to adopt a suggestive but improbable view, that the fire here is the overheated axle which sets fire to the wheel. Others explain the phrase, 'our changeful life,' from the rapid motion of a wheel (cf. the 'wheel of fortune'), or the 'orb or cycle of creation,' &c.

The word translated 'wheel' may also mean 'course'; and the analogy of i. 23 and 'world of iniquity' suggests that 'of nature' denotes a quality of the 'wheel' or 'course.' Possibly it is an awkward attempt of James to represent in Greek some Aramaic phrase for 'natural impulses' or 'passions.'

hell: in the Greek *Gehenna*, the place of evil spirits; here used for Satan, as the inspirer of the tongue in its evil activities.

R. V. marg., by changes in the punctuation, obtains two alternative renderings: (*a*) 'The tongue is a fire, that world of iniquity: the tongue is among our members that which,' &c. According to this rendering, fire, the evil, destroying element, is the world of iniquity. (*b*) 'That world of iniquity, the tongue, is among our members that which,' &c. This is similar to the R. V. text.

iii. 7, 8. *Not to be tamed.*

While men have tamed every kind of living creature, no one can tame the tongue: it is more truculent and venomous than any beast.

7. kind . . . mankind: *lit.* 'nature . . . human nature.'

8. the tongue can no man tame. This need not be taken literally to mean that no individual can control his own tongue. It may be a rhetorical hyperbole.

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[1] τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως: cf. i. 23, 'his natural face,' τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως.

no man tame; *it is* a restless evil, *it is* full of deadly
9 poison. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and
therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness
10 of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing
and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to
11 be. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening
12 sweet *water* and bitter? can a fig tree, my brethren,
yield olives, or a vine figs? neither *can* salt water yield
sweet.

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? let him

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restless. The same word is translated 'unstable' in i. 8. A. V., with some ancient authorities, has 'unruly.'

iii. 9-12. *Fickle.*

The tongue, moreover, is fickle; a tree can be depended on to produce one kind of fruit, and a spring one sort of water; but the tongue sometimes blesses and sometimes curses.

9. the Lord and Father: a unique expression; A. V., with inferior MSS., 'God even the Father.'

after the likeness of God: Gen. i. 26.

10. cursing: here probably in the sense of abusive railing.

12. neither can salt water yield sweet. A curious expression, modified in inferior MSS. to 'So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh'; so A. V.

The idea of the true text seems to be that as a tree can only produce fruit, and a spring water, of one kind, so the utterances of a tongue will be of one kind, i. e. the tongue which indulges in ill-natured abuse is incapable of true praise of God; the abuse can no more pass into praise than salt water can change to fresh. 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen' (1 John iv. 20).

iii. 13-18. *The true wisdom.*

Such bitter railing is inspired by a jealous and quarrelsome spirit. If you harbour this spirit, your claim to possess the wisdom of Christ is a false and empty boast; and your wisdom comes from Satan, and issues in every kind of evil. The wisdom from above inspires mutual kindliness and good feeling, and thus leads to a holy life.

13. understanding[1]: A. V., 'endued with knowledge.' According to Mayor, 'used in classical Greek for a skilled or scientific person as opposed to one who has no special knowledge or training.'

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[1] ἐπιστήμων, only here in the N. T.

shew by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.
But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, 14
glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is 15
not *a wisdom* that cometh down from above, but is
earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and fac- 16
tion are, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the 17

Here the man who thinks himself 'wise and understanding' is the professing Christian, who supposes that he has attained to spiritual enlightenment, and is eager to display his wisdom by teaching others.

life[1]: A. V., 'conversation' (see on 1 Pet. i. 15).

in meekness of wisdom. If you are wise, shew it by living in the meek spirit which wisdom inspires. Conduct is the criterion of wisdom as well as of faith (ii. 18). Contrast this verse with the idea of a king

'Who never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one.'

For 'meekness' see on 1 Pet. iii. 4.

14. faction[2]: by etymology the mercenary service of a hireling; and so generally the zeal a man shews for a party or for opinions because they are *his*, not because they are Christ's. The eagerness of James's readers to teach had evidently led to angry controversy.

lie: by claiming a wisdom which their bitter railing shewed they did not possess.

the truth: either, simply, 'the facts of the case,' or Christianity, which was discredited when such men put themselves forward as its exponents.

15. earthly: limited to material things, and wholly lacking in spiritual illumination.

sensual: R. V. marg., 'natural' or 'animal[3],' i. e. limited to the mere animal life, and wholly lacking any fellowship with the Divine Spirit. Thus 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.'

devilish: *lit.* 'demoniacal,' inspired by such malignant beings as those whom Jesus cast out from the unfortunate beings who were possessed by them. The tongue which was eager to expound such wisdom might well be said to be 'set on fire by hell' (verse 6).

16. confusion[4]: the noun corresponding to the adjectives

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[1] *ἀναστροφή.*

[2] *ἐριθεία*, only elsewhere in verse 16, and in the Pauline Epistles; grouped with 'jealousy,' *ζῆλος*, in 2 Cor. xii. 20; Gal. v. 20.

[3] *ψυχική*, only elsewhere in Jude 19 and 1 Cor. (four times).

[4] *ἀκαταστασία.*

wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable,
gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,
18 without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of
righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

translated 'unstable' (i. 8) and 'restless' (iii. 8). It is used in 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 'God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.' It is the disorderliness caused by selfish quarrels.

17. pure[1]. This word and its cognates are comparatively rare in the N.T., being chiefly found in the Pauline Epistles. These words are used in the LXX for the ceremonial cleanness required by the Levitical law; but this is not what James refers to here. In classical Greek the word is defined as 'filled with religious awe; sacred, undefiled, impartial,' &c. It has been pointed out[2] that it implies just that susceptibility to the influence of the spirit, the absence of which is denoted by 'earthly, sensual, devilish.' Perhaps the term 'consecrated,' as used in the phrase 'a consecrated life,' would best express the meaning here (cf. Phil. i. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 2; 1 John iii. 3). It is sometimes used in the N. T. in the special sense of 'chaste' (2 Cor. xi. 2, &c.); but obviously its meaning cannot be so narrowly limited here. In Matt. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' a different Greek word[3] is used.

gentle. See on 1 Pet. ii. 18.

easy to be intreated[4]: rather 'docile'; the opposite term[5] is constantly used in the N. T. to mean 'disobedient.'

mercy. See on ii. 13.

without variance[6]: i. e. not given to disputing. R. V. marg., 'without doubtfulness,' i. e. having an assured faith, free from double-mindedness (i. 8). This latter is the more probable rendering. The other R. V. marg., 'without partiality' = A. V., has little in its favour.

18. the fruit of righteousness is sown: i. e. the seed is sown from which the fruit is produced.

in peace: not in the bitter controversies which these would-be teachers were eager to set on foot. Cf. Isa. xxxii. 17.

for them that make peace: rather, as R. V. marg., 'by them that make peace.'

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[1] *ἁγνή.* [2] H. von Soden. [3] *καθαρός*, clean.
[4] *εὐπειθής*, only here in the N. T. [5] *ἀπειθής.*
[6] *ἀδιάκριτος*, only here in the N. T.; the positive verb *διακρίνειν*, in its various forms, is used to denote 'to discuss, discern, differ, doubt' (so i. 6, ii. 4).

Whence *come* wars and whence *come* fightings among 4
you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your pleasures that
war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, 2
and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye
have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, 3

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iv. 1–3. *Unruly greed.*

The real cause of your quarrels is not any devotion to truth, but the craving for personal gratification. You seek this not by prayer, but by strife; even if you pray, your prayers are vain, because they are inspired by selfish greed.

1. wars . . . fightings among you: quarrels between professing Christians, including, no doubt, disputes on doctrine, on the management of church affairs, and on the choice of leaders, iii. 1, 14.

pleasures[1]. Used here, as usual, in a bad sense, to mean the sinful gratification of selfish or wrong cravings. As these 'pleasures' were the cause of dissension, the lust for power, pre-eminence and revenge, and for the humiliation of rivals would be conspicuous. Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 11.

2. lust: eagerly desire such gratifications as the above.

ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain. The present text, which is found substantially in all the ancient authorities, presents insuperable difficulties. 'Kill' is out of place; 'kill, covet,' &c., gives an anti-climax; nor can 'kill' be simply a rhetorical exaggeration for 'hate.' Something may be gained by a change in the punctuation, thus: 'Ye lust, and have not; ye kill. And ye covet, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war.' But even so, the construction of the sentence is clumsy; there is still an anti-climax in passing from 'kill' to 'fight and war'; and it is difficult to believe that James would charge professing Christians with the habit of committing murder in this matter-of-fact way[2]. Probably there has been some early mistake in copying the text, and we should read 'ye are envious[3]' for 'ye kill[4].' This emendation would give us, translating literally, 'ye are envious and jealous.'

ask, in prayer. A touch of irony which suggests most forcibly the incompatibility of such conduct with the profession of Christianity.

3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, &c. Lest irony should be misunderstood, James puts the point directly. Prayers suggested by 'devilish' wisdom (iii. 15) and uttered by a tongue 'set on fire by hell' (iii. 6) could not obtain what they sought. Hence i. 5 and Matt. vii. 7, 8 are conditional.

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[1] ἡδονή.

[2] Cf. further on v. 6.

[3] φθονεῖτε.

[4] φονεύετε.

because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend *it* in your
4 pleasures. Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an
5 enemy of God. Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us

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spend *it* in your pleasures. They would ask for prosperity, for influence, leadership in the church, knowledge, wisdom, and the gift of attractive and persuasive utterance, but solely that they might gratify selfish and sinful desires.

iv. 4–6. *The world and God.*

You deny the truth of my accusations, but they are proved by your eagerness to stand well with the world which is alienated from God. If you bestow your friendship on the world, you make yourselves God's enemies; for His jealous affection will not allow you to be friends with Him and with His enemies at the same time, neither will He tolerate the arrogant self-assertion which your worldly ambition inspires.

4. adulteresses. There is no satisfactory explanation of the Apostle's use of this word here. It is commonly explained to mean 'adulterous souls,' 'adulterous' being used, as such terms often are in the O. T. (Deut. xxxi. 16, &c.), of those who forsake the true God for some other object of worship, here worldly advantage. The word is sometimes regarded as the conclusion of verse 3, thus: 'That ye may spend it in your pleasures, ye adulteresses! Know ye not,' &c. The A. V., following inferior MSS., simplifies matters by reading 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses.' Most of the ancient versions have 'Ye adulterers'; they probably read 'adulteresses,' but translated freely to suit their ideas of the sense.

friendship of the world: i. e. their friendship towards the world. For 'world' see on i. 27.

5. the scripture. The quotation in this verse is not found anywhere in the O. T. It may be (*a*) a very free paraphrase of passages like Exod. xx. 5, which speak of 'a jealous God'; or (*b*) a quotation from some lost apocryphal work; or (*c*)—but much less probably—the reference may be to the quotation in verse 6, the intervening words being parenthetic.

speaketh in vain: i. e. that the truth of its statement is uncertain, and that its words have no authoritative claim on our attention; for 'speaketh,' 'saith,' introducing a quotation.

Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? i. e. Does the spirit of Christ which he has given his disciples inspire them with the eager craving for self-indulgence which makes men envy one another?

long unto envying? But he giveth more grace. Where- 6
fore *the scripture* saith, God resisteth the proud, but
giveth grace to the humble. Be subject therefore unto 7
God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse 8
your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye

It is doubtful, however, whether this is the meaning of the original, which is very obscure.

The A. V. makes the quotation not a question, but a statement, and translates a somewhat different text thus, 'The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy,' making the words a description of the depraved spirit of the natural man.

The R. V. marg. offers us two alternatives: (*a*) 'The spirit which he made to dwell in us he yearneth for even unto jealous envy, i. e. according to the figure of Gen. ii. 7, man's spirit is the breath of God, and thus God yearns for man's love, and cannot bear that any portion of it should be given to His enemies. (*b*) 'That spirit which he made to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy.' This is practically equivalent to the preceding; God's Spirit, indwelling in man through Christ, craves his undivided love. Probably one of the renderings of the R. V. marg. should be adopted, as the most suitable to the context.

6. But he giveth more grace. The more earnest God's desire for man's love, the greater grace He bestows upon him.

God resisteth the proud, &c. Prov. iii. 34. The quotation is taken from the LXX, except that the latter has 'The Lord resisteth,' &c. The Hebrew has 'Surely he scorneth the scorners, but giveth grace,' &c. The same quotation, in exactly the same words as here, occurs in 1 Pet. v. 5.

Pride refuses to yield to God, humility submits to the most exacting demands of the Divine love; each receives appropriate treatment.

iv. 7-10. *God the rightful Master.*

Yield therefore to God; conform your lives to His will in a spirit of penitent humility, and He will accept you. Do not fear the powers of evil, for they are easily vanquished if you resist them.

7. the devil: the representative of the 'world.' Cf. our Lord's experience at his temptation.

8. purify. Cf. on iii. 17; here the verb means 'put aside all hesitation, and consecrate your hearts wholly to God.' The same phrase occurs in 1 Pet. i. 22.

9 doubleminded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to
10 heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

11 Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.
12 One *only* is the lawgiver and judge, *even* he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?

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doubleminded. Cf. i. 8.

9. Be afflicted, &c.: on account of their sin.

10. he shall exalt you. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 6.

iv. 11, 12. *The duty of brotherliness.*

In order to conform to the Divine will, you must live in charity with the brethren, and refrain from slander and fault-finding. If you set yourselves up as judges, you offend against the majesty of the Divine law, whose functions you usurp.

11. Speak not one against another. The Apostle returns to a subject which was evidently very much on his mind. Cf. i. 19, 26; ii. 12; iii. 9, 16; iv. 1; v. 9.

speaketh against the law, &c. The general sense of these verses is clear (cf. above), but the exact interpretation of details is uncertain. Lucid expression seems to have been sacrificed to epigrammatic form. The idea seems to be that judgement is provided for by law, and not left to individual caprice. Irresponsible fault-finding implies that the judgements of the law are inadequate. Another interpretation is that 'the law of liberty' (i. 25) forbids judging (Matt. vii. 1, 2), therefore judging breaks the law, and so 'speaks against' and 'judges' it.

12. One only: i. e. God.

able to save, &c. Cf. Matt. x. 28.

who art thou that judgest, &c. Cf. Rom. xiv. 4, 10-13; 1 Cor. x. 29.

iv. 13-17. *The uncertainty of life.*

Submission to the Divine will is not consistent with confidence in far-reaching plans for the acquisition of wealth, or for any kind of personal advantage. Life is so frail and transitory that boasts as to the future are absurd, and—to those who might know better—even wicked.

Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will 13
go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and
get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the 14
morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that
appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.
For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both 15
live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your 16
vauntings: all such glorying is evil. To him therefore 17
that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries **5**

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13. Go to now. An obsolete Elizabethan phrase, explained '"Come, come, take the right course"; spoken sometimes sarcastically [as here], sometimes encouragingly[1].'

14. on the morrow. Much less a year hence.

15. Ye are[2] a vapour. A. V., 'it is[3] even a vapour,' with some ancient authorities; others, 'it will be[4].' Cf. Job vii. 7; Ps. cii. 3.

17. knoweth: as an enlightened Christian.

to do good: to accept the fact that the future is entirely dependent on God, and to act accordingly.

v. 1-6. *The doom of oppressors.*

Woe unto you that are rich, and have hoarded wealth, or lived in wanton luxury, amidst misery which you have aggravated by defrauding your labourers of their just wages, and by procuring the condemnation and punishment of the innocent.

1. Go to. See on iv. 13.

ye rich. As the letter is addressed to Christians—note 'brethren,' i. 2; ii. 1, 14; iii. 1, 10, 12; iv. 11; v. 7, 12, 19—it seems natural to understand 'rich' as 'rich (professing) Christians.' We should prefer to suppose that rich heathen are denounced in these verses, and some scholars have taken this view. Note that the 'rich' are not addressed as 'brethren.' But the language is not stronger than in other paragraphs, e. g. iv. 1, 2, which are generally accepted as addressed to Christians. In some respects the exposition of the book would be easier if it were taken to be notes of exhortations delivered to a mixed audience.

weep and howl. We must bear in mind that Orientals are extremely demonstrative in the expression of emotion.

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[1] Article 'Go' in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.
[2] ἐστέ. [3] ἐστί. [4] ἔσται.

2 that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted,
3 and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your
silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony
against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have
4 laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire
of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you
kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them
that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
5 Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken

coming upon you: i. e. are close at hand.

2, 3. corrupted . . . moth-eaten . . . rusted: prophetic perfects; the inevitable fate of their wealth is set forth as if it were already realized.

their rust shall be for a testimony against (R. V. marg., 'unto') **you**, as having broken Christ's injunction, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume' (Matt. vi. 19, 20).

3. shall eat your flesh as fire. The eating away of metal by rust suggests the idea of selfish greed resulting in corruption which eats into the flesh—the flesh being either understood literally or used as a figure for the lower unspiritual life. Avarice and sinful self-indulgence defeat their own ends and issue in misery, even as regards the flesh.

in the last days: immediately before the coming of Christ, when there would not be time to enjoy the treasure, and when spiritually-minded men should have been occupied by other matters. For many wealthy Jews this warning was fulfilled shortly before the Fall of Jerusalem, A. D. 70; they were ruined and murdered, often with cruel tortures. For the individual the imminence of the future life makes these sayings of the Apostle always true, quite apart from all theories as to the second coming. A. V. has 'for the last days'—an inaccurate translation.

4. mowed: a different word[1] from that translated 'reaped[2].' Both words, however, are general terms for gathering in crops; hence A. V. translates both by 'reaped.'

kept back by fraud: it is uncertain whether the original Greek read 'kept in arrears' or 'permanently withheld.'

Lord of Sabaoth: i. e. Jehovah Sabaoth, an ancient title of the God of Israel, commonly translated 'Lord of Hosts.' The

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[1] ἀμάω. [2] θερίζω.

your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day
of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the 6
righteous *one*; he doth not resist you.

Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the 7

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phrase 'Lord of Sabaoth' only occurs elsewhere in the N.T. in Rom. ix. 29, a quotation from Isaiah.

On this verse generally cf. Deut. xxiv. 15; Jer. xxii. 13.

5. lived delicately . . . taken your pleasure: an inadequate translation; the Greek words have a bad sense in themselves, and imply excess and debauchery. Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 13.

nourished your hearts: a unique expression, = 'Ye have been absorbed in self-indulgence, and therefore without susceptibility to the influence of the Spirit.' 'Heart' in the Bible refers to the intellect almost more than to the emotions.

day of slaughter: an O.T. phrase (Jer. xii. 3, xxv. 34) for such Divine visitations as the siege and sack of Jerusalem.

6. the righteous one: or, as A.V., 'the Just'; sometimes supposed to refer to the Jews and Christ, as in Acts vii. 52, but rather a general statement. The rich used their influence to coerce, or their wealth to bribe, judges into condemning innocent men who were obnoxious to them. Cf. Jezebel and Naboth. The history of persecution and of contending sects and rival ecclesiastics will shew that such crimes have constantly been committed, not merely by professing Christians, but even in the name of the church and of Christ himself.

he doth not resist you. They were deaf to the silent appeal of patient helplessness. The following paragraph intimates that the righteous would not long be at the mercy of their oppressors.

v. 7–11. *Encouragement in patient endurance.*

Ye, brethren, who suffer such things, remember that the coming of the Lord is at hand. Wait patiently, as the farmer waits for his crops. Do not let your troubles make you fretful with one another; the coming of the Lord brings judgement as well as deliverance. Endure as Job and the prophets endured; the loving-kindness of God shall abundantly recompense you.

7. Be patient, here and in verse 8, and 'patience' in verse 10, translate words[1] often rendered 'longsuffering,' and denote the spirit which prevents the sufferer from complaining, or from being led by his suffering into unworthy words or deeds.

coming of the Lord. This 'coming' or *parousia* is only

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[1] *μακροθυμέω, μακροθυμία.*

Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious
fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive
8 the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish
your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
9 Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be
not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors.
10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of

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mentioned elsewhere in the N. T. in verse 8, in Matthew (4 times), in the Pauline Epistles (15 times), in 2 Peter (i. 16, iii. 4, 12), and in 1 John (ii. 28). The same event is also spoken of as the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ,' 1 Pet. i. 7, &c. (which see), and the 'Manifestation (of the Lord),' &c., in the Pastoral Epistles, e. g. 1 Tim. vi. 14. Thessalonians and 1 Peter are largely taken up with this subject. The first generation of Christians expected to witness in the near future (verses 8 and 10) the personal reappearence of Christ on the earth to close the old dispensation by punishing unbelievers, and delivering the Christians. These expectations were partly realized when the fall of Jerusalem closed the old Jewish dispensation by the destruction of the Temple and the final cessation of the Levitical worship of Jehovah. At the same time misery and ruin befell the Jewish nation which had rejected and crucified our Lord. As regards any more exact fulfilment, the statements of the N. T. must be interpreted according to the principle laid down in 2 Pet. iii. 8, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' Cf. also on verse 3, and cf. 1 John ii. 18.

waiteth: between the sowing and the reaping, while he himself can do little or nothing, a period of at least three months.

the early and latter rain: in autumn and spring respectively. At the present time, however, wet weather continues from about the end of October to March, and there are not two distinct rainy seasons separated by a period of fine weather. The phrase is from the O. T., Deut. xi. 14, &c.

8. stablish your hearts: take courage and be firm, brace yourselves.

9. Murmur not . . . one against another. This exhortation is not suggested by the immediate context, but by the Apostle's anxiety—evident throughout the Epistle, cf. iv. 11—to correct the quarrelsome spirit of his readers.

the judge: Christ.

10. an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets. Micaiah ben Imlah, 1 Kings xxii. 27; Isa. viii. 16-18; Jer. xx, xxvi, xxxii. 1-5, xxxviii. 1-13, &c.

patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which endured: ye have 11 heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither 12 by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgement.

Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any 13

patience: rather as R. V. marg., 'endurance'; a different word[1] from that used in verse 11.

11. we call them blessed which endured. Perhaps a reminiscence of the Greek version of Dan. xii. 12, 'Blessed is he that endureth.'

and have seen the end of the Lord. If this clause stood by itself we should naturally understand 'the end of the Lord' to mean the Passion of Christ as the supreme 'example of suffering and patience.' In Matt. xxvi. 58 Peter goes into the court of the high priest 'to see the end' of the trial of Christ; and in Luke xxii. 37 our Lord says, 'That which concerneth me hath an end.' This view has been taken by some scholars, but it is scarcely correct in view of the following clause. We should therefore rather take 'the end of the Lord' to mean the blessed end to which the Lord brought the sufferings of Job.

full of pity, and merciful. A reminiscence of such passages as Pss. ciii. 8, cxi. 4.

v. 12. *Oaths.*

Most especially refrain from taking an oath.

12. above all things: evidently indicating a connexion with the general context. Perhaps = 'In your bitter controversies specially refrain from taking an oath that your views are correct, or that you will not associate with those who differ from you,' &c.

swear not: a reminiscence of our Lord's more sweeping utterance, 'Swear not at all': cf. Matt. v. 33-37. Our passage does not raise the question of oaths required by judicial authority, which are nowhere referred to or suggested in the Epistle; but forbids the spontaneous taking of oaths to emphasize one's own opinion, a practice closely akin to profane swearing.

v. 13-18. *Praise and prayer.*

Every experience and emergency has its appropriate means of

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[1] ὑπομονή, see on 2 Pet. i. 6.

14 cheerful? let him sing praise. Is any among you sick?
let him call for the elders of the church; and let them
pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the
15 Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick,
and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed
16 sins, it shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins
one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be

grace. Praise is meet for seasons of gladness; prayer for times of suffering and sickness, and consciousness of sin. The prayers of a righteous man are effectual; remember Elijah and the famine.

13. suffering: especially at the hands of others. Let him not fret or rail, but pray.

14. anointing him with oil. A very common remedy in ancient times. We might paraphrase in more modern fashion, 'Use medicine, and pray that it may be blessed.'

This anointing, however, is often supposed to be merely a religious rite.

Sometimes the passage is understood to refer exclusively to the dying, and to promise only spiritual blessings, not physical recovery. It is then interpreted, 'Prayer shall save the dying man from the punishment of his sins; and, after his death, the Lord will raise him up in the resurrection.' This view is taken by some Protestant scholars[1]; and by Romanists, the passage thus interpreted is claimed as an authority for their sacrament of extreme unction.

15. if he have committed sins. The hypothetical form of the clause is remarkable. It is commonly explained, 'If his sickness is the result of some special sin'; cf. Mark ii. 1-12.

16. Confess . . . your sins . . . and pray . . . that ye may be healed. Sometimes closely connected with the preceding—note the 'therefore'—thus, 'Confide your sins to your brethren, that, if sickness befall you, they may make these sins matter of prayer, and you may be healed of your disease'; the forgiveness of sin was sometimes thought of as a condition of bodily healing. But even if the sins to be confessed are sins in general, the healing may be spiritual. Others understand the sins to be wrongs done to those to whom they are confessed—A. V., 'Confess your faults'—and the healing to be spiritual.

The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working: i. e. works so effectively as to bring about great and blessed results. For 'in its working' Prof. Mayor would render

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[1] e. g. von Soden.

healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth
much in its working. Elijah was a man of like passions 17
with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain;
and it rained not on the earth for three years and six
months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave 18
rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, 19
and one convert him; let him know, that he which con- 20

'when it is actuated or inspired by the Spirit.' The A. V. has, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

17. Elijah. Cf. 1 Kings xvii–xxi.

a man of like passions[1]**:** better as the R. V. marg., 'of like nature.'

prayed fervently: *lit.* 'prayed with prayer,' an imitation of a Hebrew idiom.

three years and six months. According to 1 Kings xviii. 1 the period was less than three years, the rain came 'in the third year,' i. e. according to the evident intention of the narrative, the third year of the famine. This period, however, is also spoken of as 'three years and six months' in Luke iv. 25. Perhaps Jewish tradition had misinterpreted Kings; or three and a half, as the half of seven, the perfect number, may have been used as a kind of round number. The narrative in Kings does not tell us that Elijah prayed; this again may be taken from tradition.

v. 19, 20. *The blessedness of converting sinners.*

Let your prayers for those who fall into sin be the more earnest, in that you seek the most precious of all boons, the salvation of an immortal soul.

19. err from the truth: *lit.* 'go astray from the truth,' i. e. fall into sin. The A. V., 'Converteth the sinner from the error of his way,' is misleading, because 'sinner' suggests some one not yet converted to Christianity, while the text contemplates a Christian who has gone astray.

convert: bring him back to the faith and obedience of Christ, the way of truth from which he wandered.

20. a sinner. The A. V., inaccurately 'the sinner.' Though James starts from the case of an erring brother, he enforces his exhortation by a perfectly general statement, which necessarily suggests the duty of seeking to convert those who have never known Christ.

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[1] *ὁμοιοπαθής.* Only elsewhere in the N. T., Acts xiv. 15.

verteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

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save a soul. Some ancient authorities have 'his soul'; both expressions are ambiguous, and may refer either to the soul of the person who converts, or to that of the person converted. But the teaching of Scripture generally, and of this Epistle, require us to understand that it is the sinner's soul that is to be saved.

death: spiritual death.

cover a multitude of sins. Quotation from Prov. x. 12, also used in 1 Pet. iv. 8 (which see). Here the sins 'covered,' i. e. forgiven, are those of the sinner.

Note the abrupt ending. Verses 19, 20, do indeed deal with a very important topic; but they are neither a peroration, nor the logical conclusion of the Epistle. Moreover, all the usual formulæ for the end of a letter, personal references, farewell greeting, doxology, are absent. Cf. Introduction, p. 23.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF

PETER

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are 1
sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappa-

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i. 1, 2. *Salutation.*

The apostle Peter greets the brethren scattered through Asia Minor; refers to the origin, nature, and purpose of their life in Christ; and wishes them increase of grace and peace.

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. In 2 Pet. i. 1 (which see), 'Simon (or Symeon) Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.' Paul describes himself as 'an apostle of Jesus Christ (or Christ Jesus') in 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1; Titus i. 1; and there are equivalent statements in Rom. i. 1 and Gal i. 1; in Phil. i. 1 he styles himself 'slave of Christ Jesus'; in Philem. 1,' prisoner of Christ Jesus'; in 1 Thess. i. 1 and 2 Thess. i. 1 he simply styles himself 'Paul.' The authors of Hebrews and 1 John give neither name nor title; in Jas. i. 1 we have 'slave of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ,' in Jude i. 1 'a slave of Jesus Christ,' and in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1 'the elder.' On 'Jesus Christ' see Jas. i. 1.

to the elect: i. e. members of the Christian Church, as in Matt. xxiv. 22, 24; Rom. viii. 33; so called as called or chosen out of the world. The term is used in the LXX of the Israelites.

sojourners[1]. Only elsewhere in the N.T. in ii. 11 (which see), 'aliens and sojourners' of the readers, and Heb. xi. 13, 'strangers and sojourners' of the patriarchs, quoting Gen. xxiii. 4; the same phrase occurs in Ps. xxxix. 12. In both these passages the LXX has *paroikos* and *parepidemos*, as in ii. 11. The word is figurative, as in ii. 11, and strikes one of the key-notes of the Epistle; its readers are only sojourners in this world, and purely worldly affairs, even loss of property and bodily suffering, are only secondary matters to them. See also next note.

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[1] παρεπιδήμοις.

the Dispersion. Only elsewhere in the N.T., John vii. 35; Jas. i. 1; *lit.* 'the Jews dispersed throughout the world outside Palestine.' Here it is used figuratively of Christians generally; they have become, like the Jews, strangers in every land, with a heavenly Canaan: cf. Introduction, pp. 44 f.

Pontus. A district of Asia Minor, lying along the coast of the Black Sea, formally incorporated in the Roman Empire by Nero shortly before the probable date of this Epistle, A.D. 60–65. There are only two other references to this district in the N. T.: Jews from Pontus were present at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 9; and Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, Acts xviii. 2. Trapezus, the modern Trebizond, was an important town of Pontus. Under the celebrated Mithridates Pontus was the nucleus of a powerful kingdom which was overthrown by the Romans, B.C. 65. It was then governed for some time by dependent princes, whose status was similar to that of the rulers of the native states in India. Nothing is known of the first introduction of Christianity into Pontus; but about A.D. 110–112 the younger Pliny was governor of Pontus and Bithynia, and there is extant a correspondence between him and the emperor Trajan as to the Christians of his province. He reports to the emperor that the Christians were so numerous that the temples were almost deserted, and asks how he is to deal with them. The emperor replies that they are to be left alone as far as possible, but that notorious cases of obstinate Christianity must be punished. Marcion, a distinguished Gnostic of the first half of the second century, belonged to Pontus.

Galatia: the central district of Asia Minor. The orginal Galatia was a comparatively small territory in the north centre of Asia Minor. Originally Phrygian, it was conquered by Gaulish invaders about B.C. 277; later on it was governed by princes dependent on Rome, and passed under direct Roman rule. The Roman province of Galatia included large additions to the original Galatia, especially to the east and south. Its extent constantly varied, but in N. T. times it included the cities of Pisidia and Lycaonia, which Paul visited on his first and second, and perhaps also his third, missionary journeys. There were many Greeks both in the original Galatia and in the rest of the province.

It is matter of controversy whether the Galatia which Paul is said to have visited in Acts xvi. 6 (second journey), and xviii. 23 (third journey), and to which Galatians was addressed, was the original Galatia (North Galatian theory), or the southern district of the Roman province, the scene of the first journey (South Galatian theory).

The meaning of Galatia here will, in all probability, depend on the view taken of this controversy; but in any case Galatia in our passage is the district which Paul evangelized, and to which he docia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge 2

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addressed his Epistle. See also concluding note on these geographical terms.

It is worth noticing that the list of countries in Acts ii. does not include Galatia.

Cappadocia: the inland district east of Galatia and south of Pontus, formed into a Roman province in A.D. 17. Jews from Cappadocia were present on the Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 9. The district is not mentioned elsewhere in the N. T., and nothing is known as to the first introduction of Christianity into the province, neither is it conspicuous in the history of the church in the first two centuries.

Asia: the Roman province so called, formed in B.C. 133. It extended along the east coast of the Levant, and included the districts anciently known as Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia (the greater part). Its coasts were dotted with celebrated Greek cities, like Ephesus and Miletus. Ephesus and its neighbourhood had been for some time the scene of Paul's successful labours. Christianity flourished here from Paul's time onwards: Polycarp, for instance, was bishop of Smyrna, and Papias of Hierapolis. The 'seven churches' of Revelation belonged to Asia.

Bithynia lay along the coast of the Black Sea to the west of Pontus. It was bequeathed to Rome by its last king in B.C. 74, and united in a single province with Pontus. It is not mentioned in Acts ii. 9, the only other reference to it in the N.T. being Acts xvi. 7, 'They,' Paul and his companions, 'assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.' This was on the second journey. We are told nothing as to the first introduction of Christianity into Bithynia, but we know that it flourished there at the beginning of the second century.

In N.T. times there was no general name in use corresponding to Asia Minor; hence this list is the natural way of describing that area. It does not include some of the smaller districts of Asia Minor, but it may not have been thought necessary to make the list exhaustive. Cilicia was, perhaps, rather grouped with Syria, as in Acts xv. 23, 41; Gal. i. 21. Thus the letter is addressed to churches dispersed over an area from twice to four times as large as that of the British Isles, including some of the wealthiest and most cultured cities of the empire; inhabited by many different races, among whom Greeks and Greek-speaking Jews were the most important. Most of the churches in Asia Minor had been founded either by Paul himself, or by his converts; and in many districts Christianity grew rapidly and flourished exceedingly. Cf. map.

2. according to the foreknowledge, &c., qualifies 'elect': cf.

of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto

Rom. viii. 28, 29, 'Called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained.' This parallel passage shews that what is meant is not foreknowledge of character which led God to choose some men rather than others, but God's comprehensive foreknowledge of His own plans and working, so that foreknowledge is practically equivalent to His deliberate and far-seeing purpose. So Sanday and Headlam, on Rom. viii. 29, point out that the word translated 'know,' and its Hebrew equivalent, are used in the O. and N. T. in the sense of 'take note of,' 'fix the regard upon.'

Father . . . Spirit . . . Jesus Christ. Note the separate reference to the three Persons of the Trinity. Cf. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14, 'God chose you . . . unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' None of Paul's salutations, however, introduce the Spirit; they simply couple the Father and Christ.

sanctification (*hagiasmos*). Only elsewhere in the N. T. in the Pauline Epistles (eight times) and in Hebrews (once), properly 'the setting apart for the service of God, consecrating, hallowing'; the cognate verb is used in the clause, 'Hallowed be thy name.' The reference is perhaps to Baptism, which was often accompanied by the gift of the Spirit, and constituted a formal consecration to Christian life. The word naturally came to mean the process, and, perhaps, even the resultant state of moral reformation. This was, of course, associated with consecration to God, but is referred to here rather in the following clause than in this. Cf. also preceding note. An alternative rendering is, 'In the sanctification of the (believer's) spirit'; but this is improbable.

unto obedience[1]. Only elsewhere in the N. T. in verses 14 and 22, and in the Pauline Epistles (Romans, seven times; 2 Corinthians, three times; Philemon, once), and Hebrews (once), in such phrases as 'obedience to Christ,' 'to the truth,' 'to the faith,' and absolutely. Here it may be used absolutely, without any grammatical connexion with Jesus Christ 'unto obedience, and unto sprinkling,' &c. In any case the obedience is rendered by the believer to Christ. It seems likely, however, that, in spite of difficulties in the grammar of the Greek, the author, not being specially concerned about grammar, intended 'Jesus Christ' to refer to both 'obedience' and 'sprinkling.' 'Obedience' would be the subjection of the believer's will and of his whole life to Christ, and would effectually guard against the idea that choice by the Father and consecration by the Spirit obviated the necessity of moral conduct on his part.

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[1] ὑπακοή.

obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

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sprinkling. Only elsewhere in the N. T. in Heb. xii. 24, 'The blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.' The sprinkling of the blood of the victim was part of the Levitical ritual for the various sacrifices[1], it is connected in Exod. xxiv. 7, 8, with the conclusion of the Mosaic covenant, thus, 'And he (Moses) took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.' The combination of 'obedience' and 'sprinkling' suggests that Peter may have had this passage in his mind. In the O. T. the application of blood to the altar symbolized the Divine participation in the sacrifice; the sprinkling of other things and persons symbolized their association with the sacrifice and its effects, i. e. the realization or the restoration (atonement) of fellowship with God. The N. T. interpretation of the rite is found in Hebrews, the only book which deals with this special detail of sacrifice. In Heb. ix. 11-28 we are told that as in the sacrificial ritual the sprinkled blood cleansed persons and things, especially the tabernacle and its vessels, and inaugurated the old covenant, so the blood of Christ 'cleanses your conscience from dead works to serve the living God,' and inaugurates a new covenant, and cleanses the 'heavenly things,' of which the earthly sanctuary and its furniture are copies. Thus here the 'sprinkling' signifies the participation of the believer in the sacrifice of Christ, and in the salvation which it effects; cf. verse 18.

Grace to you and peace be multiplied. 2 Peter has the same formula used as the opening of a long sentence; Jude, 'Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.' 'Multiplied' in the salutation is peculiar to these three Epistles. The corresponding Pauline formula is 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,' with slight variations, except that Colossians omits the last five words; 1 Thessalonians has simply 'Grace to you and peace'; and 1 and 2 Timothy have 'Grace, mercy, and peace from,' &c.; 2 John 3 has the same salutation as Timothy, amplified; James has 'Greeting'; 3 John has a special prayer; and the anonymous Epistles—Hebrews and 1 John—have no salutation at all. Cf. Rev. i. 4 and note on Jude 2. It has recently been pointed out that such greetings and expressions of personal interest similar to those opening and closing the N. T.

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[1] It was not confined to the sin-offering.

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again

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Epistles are found as regular formulæ in the correspondence in Pagan Egypt, both before and after Christ[1]. Hence the formulæ of the Epistles were probably epistolary commonplaces like 'With kind regards' and 'Yours truly,' but none the less written with entire sincerity. Cf. Dan. iv. 1.

i. 3–5. *Doxology.*

Blessed be God, who, as the Father of Christ, is the ultimate source of our regeneration; and, through his resurrection, guarantees our future blessedness; and, meanwhile, keeps us safely through the dangers of this present life.

3–12. These verses form one sentence, in which Peter follows chains of association, without much regard to logical sequence or literary form, in a thoroughly Pauline fashion; cf. such paragraphs as Eph. i. 3–14, with which this section has much in common. As, however, our passage deals with a wide range of topics, it is here divided into sections for the sake of clearness of exposition.

3. Blessed be, &c. The salutation is followed by a similar amplified doxology in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians, beginning in each case, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'; the corresponding paragraph in Colossians begins, 'We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' In the other Pauline Epistles the salutation is followed by expressions of personal interest in those addressed. Cf. Rev. i. 5^{b}–7. 'Blessed' = praised. Phrases of such frequent occurrence may have been liturgical formulæ used in the worship of the primitive churches. Cf. also Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 31. The phrase has been translated, 'God even the Father, &c.'; but 'God and Father' is the more natural rendering. In Eph. i. 17 we have the unambiguous phrase, 'The God of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Cf. also Mark xv. 34, 'My God, my God.' Such phrases do not imply dogmatic propositions as to the relation of the Persons of the Trinity, but arise naturally out of the practical conditions of Christ's life. In his human life he worshipped and served God, therefore 'his' God; and in Christian preaching the true God was the God whom he revealed and concerning whom he taught.

according to his great mercy. Cf. Eph. i. 7, 'According to the riches of his grace.' 'Mercy,' see on Jas. ii. 13.

begat us again[2]. In the N. T. only here and verse 23. The idea of the beginning of the Christian life as a 'new birth' is worked out in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, John iii.

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[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Expositor,* Sept. 1898.

[2] *ἀναγεννᾶν.*

unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and 4
undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven

1–8, e.g. verse 3, 'Except a man be born anew[1], he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Cf. John i. 13; Jas. i. 18; 1 John iii. 9, which all speak of the redeemed life as originating in being 'born of God.' Titus iii. 5 speaks of the 'regeneration[2],' the new beginning or renewal of life, a term used in Matt. xix. 28 of the second coming. Gal. vi. 15 speaks of 'a new creature' or 'creation.'

a living hope. True life implies growth to maturity, and the power to use one's surroundings to aid this growth. The 'hope' into which the Christian is born helps to bring about the assured fulfilment to which it tends; 'We are saved by hope,' Rom. viii. 24.

by the resurrection. Historically, the Resurrection founded the Christian Church by finally establishing the faith of the disciples in their Master; and this event was the great fact to which the apostles appealed in proof of his Divine mission; thus Peter on the Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 24–36, iii. 15; Paul at Athens, Acts xvii. 31; Rom. i. 4, 'declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection of the dead,' &c. Moreover, the Resurrection was necessary to the continued life of Christ, and therefore to his redeeming work; Rom. v. 10, 'If . . . we were reconciled . . . through the death of his Son . . . much more shall we be saved by his life'; Phil. iii. 10, 'That I may know . . . the power of his resurrection.'

4. inheritance. See on Jas. ii. 5. The child of God is born into a Divine inheritance.

incorruptible, &c. These synonyms emphasize the idea that this inheritance, unlike all earthly wealth, maintains its perfection always unchanged, because it does not contain with itself any germs of decay.

incorruptible[3]. Only elsewhere in the N. T. in the Pauline Epistles (four times), of God, Rom. i. 23; 1 Tim. i. 17; of the Christian 'crown,' 1 Cor. ix. 25; of the believer after the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 52, and verse 23, and iii. 4.

undefiled: also Jas. i. 27.

that fadeth not away (*amarantos*). Only here in the N. T. A closely connected adjective, *amarantinos*, occurs in v. 4 (which see), and there only in the N. T. *Amarantos* occurs in Wisd. of Sol. vi. 12, 'Wisdom is radiant and fadeth not away.' It is also used as the name of a flower.

reserved[4]. In 2 Peter sinners, &c., are often spoken of as

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[1] *γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν*, R. V. marg., 'from above.'

[2] *παλινγενεσία.*

[3] *ἄφθαρτος.*

[4] *τηρεῖν.*

5 for you, who by the power of God are guarded through
faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last
6 time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little
while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold

'reserved' for judgement, or vice versa, so Jude 13; and in Jude 1, believers are spoken of as 'reserved' or 'kept.'

in heaven: beyond the reach of earthly accidents. Writing to those who had suffered, and were likely further to suffer, persecution (verse 6) Peter is constantly suggesting the powerlessness of persecution to touch the real interests of Christians.

5. guarded: a military metaphor; cf. 2 Kings vi. 17, 'The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' As has been said, 'The inheritance is preserved for the believers, and the believers for the inheritance.'

through faith: trusting itself to the protecting power of God.

a salvation ready: not something to be provided hereafter, or in course of preparation, and therefore liable never to be realized, but an accomplished fact, ready and waiting to be manifested at the right moment.

in the last time: according to N.T. phraseology not a remote future; but the period upon which they had already entered; cf. verse 20. Such passages must be read in the light of 2 Pet. iii. 8, which was written with special reference to the difficulty which they raise. See also on next verse.

i. 6–9. *The preciousness of salvation.*

The assurance of salvation a source of joy, even in sore trial, and an incentive to perseverance under persecution, and to enduring and victorious faith in the unseen Christ.

6. Wherein: not in 'the last time,' which would give a sense very difficult to combine with the context; but in view of the considerations stated in verses 3–5, 'wherefore.'

ye . . . rejoice . . . ye have been put to grief. The difference of tenses, in which the R.V. follows the Greek literally, suggests that for the moment the actual experience of suffering was in abeyance. It is, however, possible, consistently with Greek idiom, to translate as A.V., 'Ye greatly rejoice . . . though ye are in heaviness.' Cf. 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing.' The practical difference is not great, as, in any case, the readers' lives would be darkened by the shadow of recent suffering and the prospect of its speedy renewal.

for a little while: or, 'in a small degree.'

if need be: rather favours A.V. translation.

manifold temptations. The same phrase occurs in Jas. i. 2

temptations, that the proof of your faith, *being* more 7
precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by
fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour
at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen 8
ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet
believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full
of glory: receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salva- 9

(which see). The R.V. marg., 'trials,' is the better rendering, the force of the word here being 'troubles which try the patience, faith, and constancy of believers.'

7. the proof of your faith: or, 'that which is proved, genuine, in your faith.' The same phrase occurs in Jas. i. 3 (which see).

being **more precious,** &c. In the original this clause, as far as grammatical construction is concerned, refers to 'proof,' not to 'faith.' The comparison is really between 'faith' and 'gold,' and between the suffering which tests faith and the fire which tries gold; but the construction adopted suggests not only the sterling character of the believers' faith, but also that the suffering is precious, because it demonstrates that character is 'precious.' So R.V.; the alternative rendering given above is perfectly simple, and is to be preferred. (Deissmann.)

might be found unto. The issue of the proof would be that the believer would receive praise, &c.

at the revelation: which would end their trials.

8. whom not having seen. We need not press this phrase so as to make it mean that no single person in the churches addressed had ever seen Christ; its use would be justified if it applied, as it certainly must have done, to the great majority of its readers.

though now ye see him not, yet believing. They had long been expecting the vision of Christ at his second coming; they had not yet seen him thus, yet their faith stood the strain. Cf. John xx. 29, 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

full of glory. Their joy was inspired by, and in a measure already radiant with, the glory in which their trials were finally to issue. Such joy was not tainted with anything selfish, corrupt, or unworthy.

9. receiving the end, &c.: rather, 'acquiring,' 'getting possession of.' As their faith survived one trial after another, they would feel more and more that the safety of their souls, the end and aim of their faith, became not merely a future hope but a present possession.

10 tion of *your* souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied
11 of the grace that *should come* unto you: searching what *time* or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand

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your faith. The Vatican MS. and some other ancient authorities omit 'your,' but it should probably be retained.

the salvation of your **souls:** *lit.* 'the salvation of souls,' but the reference is clearly to the readers' own souls; there is no reference, either in the immediate context, or in the Epistle generally, to evangelistic work. Cf. 5^b.

With verses 6–9 cf. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, 'Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

i. 10–12. *Salvation a mystery to prophets and angels.*

The Christian salvation was made known to the prophets, as destined not for themselves, but for a future generation. Its time and circumstances were hidden alike from them and from the angels, in spite of the profound interest which both felt in the matter.

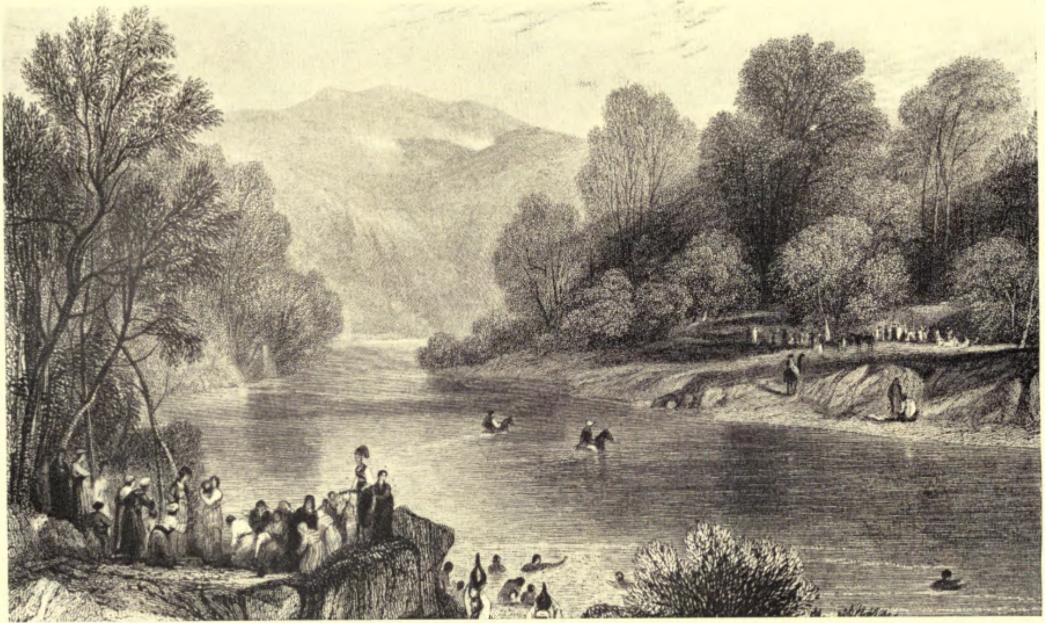
10. the prophets: *lit.* 'prophets,' even inspired men.

sought and searched: two synonyms used to express a single idea, in order to set forth a prolonged, diligent, often renewed search. This statement is made on Peter's own authority, and is a natural deduction from evident facts; it is not in human nature to be indifferent to the time when such predictions will be fulfilled. The O.T. nowhere describes this search, though there are passages which illustrate and partly justify the statement. In Isa. vi. 11 the prophet asks how long the Jews will be deaf to his preaching.

prophesied of the grace, &c. All the O.T. predictions of deliverance, glory, and prosperity for Israel are appropriated by the N.T. as setting forth the salvation and blessedness of believers. The church is the true Israel of God, Gal. vi. 16. Cf. on verse 12.

11. what manner of time. The conditions and circumstances under which the Christ would appear.

the spirit of Christ which was in them. The writers of the N.T. identify the Spirit of Christ, by whom they were consecrated to God, with the Spirit of Jehovah, who inspired the prophets.



Drawing by A. W. Callcott, R.A.

THE FORDS OF THE JORDAN

the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto them- 12

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the sufferings of Christ. In such passages as Isa. liii, applied to Christ in Matt. viii. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 22-24.

the glories that should follow them: e. g. the close of Isa. liii, and Isa. ix. 6, 7, 'Unto us a child is born,' &c.; xi. 1, 'There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse,' &c., and many similar passages.

12. To whom it was revealed, &c. The connexion of this clause with verses 10, 11 has been understood in two ways, neither of which is quite satisfactory—

(1) The revelation is the answer to the searching of the prophets. Their own searching led to nothing (cf. 2 Pet. i. 21 and note), but God graciously gave a very limited answer to their questions.

(2) The verse is parenthetical, and describes the conditions of their futile search. So much they knew by revelation that their predictions applied to a future generation; they were anxious to find out just when this generation would arise; but, so it would be implied, they failed.

The former view gives the simpler explanation, and has been pretty generally adopted.

not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things. In announcing the coming of the Messiah and the blessings he was to bestow, they were rendering no service to themselves, because these predictions were not fulfilled in their days; but they were ministering to those who lived at the time of, and after, the Incarnation, because the prophetic writings helped men who saw and heard of Christ to understand his message and believe in him.

This clause, again, does not rest on any express statement of the O. T. Experience, at any rate, must have taught the authors of the various Messianic passages that their hopes would not be realized in their own days, but by some future generation; and this may be all that is meant by our passage. Daniel, indeed, speaks of a Day of Judgement some time after, apparently soon after, the fall of Antiochus Epiphanes; but this is not a very definite intimation that Christ would come about 160 years later. Possibly our Epistle makes some use of Daniel (see on verse 23); and in Daniel it is clearly intimated that the revelations made to Daniel do not concern his own time, but a distant future. Still it is difficult to suppose that Peter has Daniel in his mind. It is not a serious objection that Dan. xii. 13 seems to imply that Daniel would, through a resurrection, share in the Messianic glories. Peter might have overlooked the passage, which, moreover, is very obscure. But there is nothing in Daniel to suggest that the prophet 'searched and sought diligently' as to times and seasons;

selves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into.

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they are very freely made known to him. Again, there is no evidence in 1 Peter, or the rest of the N.T., that the apostles and their companions used the symbolic chronological data of Daniel to prove that Christ appeared at the foreordained Messianic epoch. Again, the revelation is said to have been made to the prophets generally. Some, indeed, have understood the passage to mean that the date of the Incarnation was made known to the prophets, and attempts have often been made to extract a suitable date from Daniel by impossible interpretations of its symbolic numbers. But it is more consistent with the context to understand Peter to mean that while the prophets knew that the Messianic era lay in the future, they did not know the actual date; just as our Lord said of his second coming, 'of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father' (Mark xiii. 32).

unto you: A.V., 'us,' following inferior MSS.

these things: the announcements of the sufferings and glories of Christ.

now . . . announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven. This clause involves a claim that the events connected with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and with the foundation of the church are the sufferings and glories of the Messiah announced by the prophets. The previous verse implied that the prophets were inspired by the spirit of Christ; this verse by the phrase 'Holy Spirit' implies that the preachers of the Gospel were inspired by the same spirit as, and therefore equally with, the prophets. The allusive references shew that these truths, like many others touched upon in this paragraph, were taken for granted alike by the Apostle and his readers.

which things angels desire to look into. For 'look into' see on Jas. i. 25. It is not expressly stated that this desire is not gratified, but the context implies this (cf. below); at the same time, one would naturally expect that it will be gratified hereafter. Thus in Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.' A superiority of Christians to angels is stated in 1 Cor. vi. 3, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?'

Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober 13

Here again no authority seems to be known for Peter's statement; yet it is made in a casual fashion, as if the idea would be familiar to his readers. The relations of the prophets and angels to the Christian revelation must have been familiar topics with preachers and teachers, as they are in the N. T.; and the ideas in this paragraph may have been commonplaces in religious writings and discourses.

Verses 10–12 effectively clinch the Apostle's appeal for constancy and cheerful endurance of trials. Salvation was worth waiting for, seeing it was the realization of the teaching of the prophets, and had awakened intense interest in prophets and angels. The Christians might be persecuted and despised, yet they were the 'heirs of all the ages'; for them inspired men had laboured through past centuries, and in their own days. For a while they had to suffer; they did not know how long their trials would last, or how long they might have to wait before they were delivered by the new revelation of Christ. Yet they might well 'take for an example of suffering and patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord' (Jas. v. 10). The prophets had endured trials and persecution, and had not known when the day of deliverance would dawn. Christians looked for the second coming in their own day, whereas the prophets had no such hope; they knew that the Incarnation was reserved for a future generation. Christians might well bear patiently their uncertainty as to times and seasons, seeing that they shared this ignorance with angels (Mark xiii. 32), who knew even less of the gospel than the readers of the Epistle.

i. 13—ii. 10. General exhortation.

i. 13–16. *Be steadfast and consistent.*

Transition from the sketch of the position of the Christians to the practical application of what had been said or implied. Do not let delay and uncertainty be an excuse for falling back into sin, but resolutely concentrate your thoughts upon the assured manifestation of Christ, and imitate God's holiness.

13. Wherefore: in view of the glory and certainty of the Christian salvation, as set forth in the previous section.

girding up the loins: arranging long, flowing garments so as not to impede the wearer's movements, a necessary preparation for hard work; 'bracing oneself for an effort.'

mind. Cf. 2 Pet. iii. 1. The Christian hope can only be clearly understood and firmly held when the mind is released from the trammels of prejudice and sinful inclination and is able to act freely and vigorously. The Bible constantly requires that the intellect shall co-operate with the moral and spiritual faculties.

and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
14 as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves

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be sober[1]: in the N.T. only in 1 Thessalonians (twice), 2 Timothy (iv. 5, 'Be sober in all things'), and 1 Pet. iv. 7, v. 8; 'refrain from undue excitement' (cf. iv. 7). Those who are steadfast under persecution may be excited to a bitter, restless, unbridled anger towards their persecutors. Alike trials, delay, and the glorious hope of deliverance might cause restless excitement. Another explanation is, 'refrain from immoderate self-indulgence' (cf. verse 14). But the word does not seem to be used in this way, either in this Epistle or in the rest of the N.T.

set your hope perfectly on the grace: mistranslated by the A.V., 'Hope to the end for the grace.' Another view connects 'perfectly' with the preceding word, 'Be perfectly sober.' The R.V., like the Greek, may mean either (1) 'Cherish a confident expectation that you will receive the grace,' &c.; or (2) 'Let the grace, &c., be, above all else, the assured ground of your hopes, i.e. the circumstance which encourages you to hope.' The former is simpler; but the latter is also quite consistent with the general tone of the Epistle, which treats the second coming, the revelation of Jesus Christ, as an assured fact, which renders deliverance from present trouble certain.

the grace that is to be brought unto you, &c.: *lit.* 'that is being brought.' As in verse 9, the Apostle regards the 'revelation' as almost beginning to take place as he writes. This is a natural thought in connexion with the grace which the 'revelation' bestows, i.e.—to generalize the idea—the reinforcement of the quality and energy of the spiritual life which springs from any new manifestation of Christ. In such matters the 'revelation' casts its shadow before it; confident expectation of such blessings is rewarded by an earnest of the grace which will spring from full realization.

14. children of obedience (cf. verse 2, and see on 2 Pet. ii. 14) does not equal 'obedient children,' but 'persons one of whose characteristic qualities is obedience.'

as . . . not fashioning, &c. Here, as elsewhere in the Epistle, the grammatical structure is a little careless and involved. R.V. represents the Greek perhaps somewhat too literally; the author's ideas would probably be better expressed by beginning a new sentence with verse 14, 'Be ye children . . . and do not fashion,' &c.

fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts.

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[1] νήφειν.

according to your former lusts in *the time of* your ignorance: but like as he which called you is holy, be ye 15
yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it 16

The reference is to external 'fashion,' giving to acts, habits, and conduct a form such as that in which the former craving for self-indulgence shaped itself; relapsing into old bad habits. 'To fashion oneself according to,' *suschematizesthai*, only occurs elsewhere in the N. T. in Rom. xii. 2, which has been rendered, 'Do not adopt the external and fleeting fashion of this world, but be ye transformed in your inmost nature.'

the time of **your ignorance:** before they became Christians. The phrase implies that Gentiles are addressed; their ignorance as to true morality gave them an excuse which lapsed Christians could not plead; but Jews were not ignorant as to morals. In Acts xvii. 30, Paul, speaking to the Athenians of their idolatry, said, 'The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked.' Possibly here, as in Eph. iv. 18, cf. also 22, there is a play upon the words 'mind[1]' (Eph., 'understanding') and 'ignorance[2]'; they are not, however, connected by derivation.

15. like as he which called you is holy: R.V. marg., 'like the Holy One which called you.' There is no practical difference; in either case the point of the clause is the duty of imitating the Divine holiness.

he which called you: i.e. God, as in Rom. viii. 30, 'Whom he foreordained, them he also called.' Cf. on 'elect' in verse 1.

holy[3]: the usual equivalent in the LXX of the Hebrew *qādōsh* (so, for instance, in the following quotation), the term used for things and persons withdrawn from common use, and consecrated to the service of Jehovah. Thus *qādōsh* meant 'belonging to God,' 'Divine,' and came to be used to describe Jehovah's nature as God. Hence it came to imply the moral character which God Himself possessed, and which should be imitated by persons consecrated to His service. Similarly, *hagios* in classical Greek meant 'devoted to the Gods and their service,' and came to mean 'pious, moral.' In the N. T. it often retains its original sense of 'set apart for the worship or service of God'; so, for instance, in Acts xxi. 28, the Temple is called the 'holy place,' and so, Jude 3, the members of the church are called the 'saints,' literally the holy; so too the Divine Spirit is called the Holy Spirit. But it naturally implies moral character, and this is often its chief sense, so here; cf. Jas. iii. 17.

manner of living[4]. The A.V. 'conversation' has exactly the same meaning, being used in its Elizabethan sense of 'behaviour,

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[1] *διάνοια.* [2] *ἄγνοια.* [3] *ἅγιος.* [4] *ἀναστροφή.*

17 is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons

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conduct.' The clause means, 'In all the different concerns of life, at home, in business, in your pleasures, in social and political affairs, act as becomes the called of God.'

16. because: also used to introduce quotations in verse 24 and ii. 6.

it is written. Cf. Lev. xi. 44, xix. 2, xx. 7. The words quoted serve as a kind of text for large portions of Leviticus, where it is applied to a number of external details of conduct and worship.

Ye shall be holy. So the LXX; the original, in Leviticus, is 'Be ye holy,' so the A.V., following a text in which the scribe corrected the quotation to make it agree more closely with the Hebrew O. T.

i. 17–21. *The true life of the redeemed.*

Since you are sons of God, the Righteous Judge, let the awe of Him be upon you for the brief time of trial that yet remains; and remember that you have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, according to God's eternal purpose, realized in our days, and sealed by his Resurrection and glorification, for the establishing of your faith and hope.

17. if ye call on him as Father. It is implied that the hypothesis is correct, that they *did* call on God as Father. Therefore, since they claimed to be God's children, let them respect His authority. Cf. Jer. iii. 19, 'I (God) said, Ye shall call me My father; and shall not turn away from following me.' A.V., less accurately, has, 'if ye call on the Father.'

Father, who . . . judgeth. There is no antithesis between God's sovereignty and His fatherhood. The fatherhood includes the sovereignty and much more. In ancient times the authority of a father over his children was, if anything, more absolute than that of a sovereign over his subjects; the father could put his children to death or sell them for slaves. The obedience and deference due to a father and his 'judgements' would affect life much more constantly than those exacted by the state.

without respect of persons[1]. A word only found in this passage and in comments on it. The same idea is expressed in Peter's speech at the house of Cornelius the centurion (Acts x. 34), 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter-of-persons[2],' and in Rom. ii. 11, 'There is no respect-of-persons[3] with God,' with which Eph. vi. 9 and Col. iii. 25 are almost identical. In the ancient East, judges were often little influenced by the merits of the cases they tried, but decided in favour of the suitor who was the more influenjudgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: knowing that ye were redeemed, 18

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[1] *ἀπροσωπολήμπτως.* [2] *προσωπολήμπτης.* [3] *προσωπολημψία.*

tial, or offered the larger bribe. The absence of such respect-of-persons was one of the most striking differences between God and the ordinary human judge. Persecuted Christians might be over-awed by the authority and pomp of those who ordered them to recant; being themselves often poor and obscure, or even slaves, they might think themselves excused for disloyalty to Christ by their own inferiority; but these differences of human station counted for nothing with God. Again, Christians of wealth and rank had to choose between these and loyalty to Christ; they are reminded that neither social nor church standing would shield them from the Divine displeasure (see below).

judgeth according to each man's work. Cf. Rom. ii. 5, 6, 'The righteous judgement of God; who will render to every man according to his works'; and 2 Cor. v. 10, 'We must all be made manifest before the judgement-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' The Apostle is not concerned here with the very difficult question of the relation of the Atonement to the sins into which true Christians constantly fall after their conversion. He is rather seeking to dissuade his readers from entirely abandoning Christian morality. Such a surrender would probably be accompanied or followed by open denial of Christ, and even if it were not, would be a fatal falling from grace. No Christian profession or outward status of church member or official would save such.

pass (*anastraphēte*): the verb corresponding to *anastrophē*; see verse 15. 'Let all the various activities which occupy your time be controlled,' &c.

sojourning[1]. Only elsewhere in the N. T., Acts xiii. 17, of the 'sojourning' of Israel in Egypt. The personal noun[2] is a synonym of the word for 'sojourner' in verse 1, which see. The period of trial would be brief, a mere 'sojourning,' short, perhaps literally, but at any rate in comparison to the future life.

in fear: an obvious sequel to 'judgeth,' but arising also out of 'Father.' Peter evidently believed that his readers were divided in their minds, conscious of some unfaithful inclination or desire. In such a case, the better side of their nature needed to be reinforced by a wholesome awe of the Father's displeasure. They had not the 'perfect love' which 'casteth out fear.'

Cf., on the whole verse, 2 Chron. xix. 7, in Jehoshaphat's address to his judges on the occasion of their appointment:

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[1] *παροικία* [2] *πάροικος.*

not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your
19 vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but
with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and

'Let the fear of Jehovah be upon you . . . for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.'

18. redeemed: *lit.* 'ransomed'; only elsewhere in the N. T., Luke xxiv. 21, 'We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel,' and Titus ii. 14, 'Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' In the LXX the word is used of Jehovah 'ransoming' Israel from their bondage in Egypt (Exod. vi. 6), and from other troubles. 'Ransom' is a favourite N. T. figure for the work of Christ; the point lies in the payment of a price, the unhappy state of the sinner, and the deliverance. We must not press the figure so far as to look for some one to whom the price is paid, e. g. according to mediæval theology, the devil.

not with corruptible things. Cf. verses 4 and 7; naturally, admission to the incorruptible inheritance is not purchased with a corruptible 'ransom.'

from your vain manner of life. The Apostle's object was to confirm his readers in the Christian 'manner of life'; hence he reminds them of what it cost Christ to ransom them from their previous unworthy condition. The ransom here is from the degradation of an evil life, and from the bondage of sin, as in Titus ii. 14. The figure is also used in the N. T. of deliverance from the guilt of sin, e. g. Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' The one deliverance necessarily implies the other.

handed down from your fathers. A single word, only used here in the N. T. The 'vanity,' worthlessness, of their manner of life had been hereditary; in the case of Gentiles, polytheism, with its gross superstitions and low standard of morals; in the case of Jews, the reliance on external ceremonies and on Jewish birth rather than on a true spiritual relation to God expressing itself in a holy life. In either case the sin and guilt from which they were ransomed attached themselves to a mode of life sanctioned by conventional religion and morality.

19. as of a lamb, &c. A familiar N. T. figure, derived from the ritual of the Passover (Exod. xii. 5). So John i. 29 (36), 'Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'; Acts viii. 32 (A. V.), 'Like a lamb dumb before his shearer,' and the numerous references in Revelation (v. 6, &c.). Cf. Isa. lii. 3, liii. 6, 7. The figure sets forth Christ as the perfect sacrifice.

without spot, *even the blood* of Christ: who was fore- 20
known indeed before the foundation of the world, but
was manifested at the end of the times for your sake,
who through him are believers in God, which raised him 21
from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith
and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified 22

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20. foreknown. See on verse 2; the A.V. 'foreordained' fairly expresses the idea.

before the foundation of the world. Cf. Eph. i. 4, 'Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.' A ransom which thus formed part of God's eternal purpose could not be corruptible or transient either in itself or its results, but must be alike adequate and sure. So Christ is called in Rev. xiii. 8 (A.V.), 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'

manifested: in his Incarnation, Resurrection, and Glorification. Cf. the next verse, and Heb. ix. 26.

at the end of the times: i. e. in the Christian era, regarded as the final period in the religious history of man (cf. on verse 5). The A. V. 'these last times' translates an inferior reading.

21. believers. The word *pistos* translated 'believer' is used in the N. T. in two senses: (1) 'believer' or 'believing,' e. g. John xx. 27, 'Be not faithless (*apistos*), but believing (*pistos*).' It is generally taken in this sense here. The readers of the Epistle had been led to believe in God through what they had heard of Christ, and through their experience of his salvation. If this is the true interpretation, Peter must have chiefly had Gentile converts in his mind, because their conversion to Christianity also led them to believe in the true God. (2) *Pistos* also means 'faithful,' as in iv. 19, 'a faithful Creator.' It was through the grace of Christ that they were loyal to God.

An alternative reading, *pisteuontas*, supported by some good authorities, could only mean 'believers.'

which raised him from the dead. Elsewhere in the N. T. only in the Epistles of Paul, with whom it is a favourite phrase, used as an epithet with or of 'God' (cf. Rom. viii. 11, &c.).

gave him glory. 'To render praise or homage to God' is a common Biblical sense of 'to give glory.' Here it may refer to God's expression of approval towards Christ, 'honoured him.' The evidence of such honour would lie in his exaltation to 'the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Heb. i. 3); cf. Acts vii. 55, where Stephen sees 'the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' Or this exaltation may be the 'glory' which is given.

might be: or perhaps 'are.' One object or result of God's dealings was to stimulate faith and hope.

your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart

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i. 22–ii. 3. *Brotherly love in the new life.*

First application to a particular duty: the new birth to an eternal life, a reason for mutual goodwill.

22. purified. See also on Jas. iii. 17, iv. 8, a technical term for avoiding or removing ceremonial uncleanness. This process might be termed 'sanctifying' in view of its consecrating persons and things to God, or 'purifying' in view of its separating them from common objects. Here, as applied to the soul, it extends beyond mere external separation from heathen worship and habits to the abandonment of false principles and beliefs, and evil desires and passions.

in your obedience to the truth. 'The truth' is not so much the definite rules laid down by Christ and his apostles as a comprehensive term embracing all the means by which the will of Christ is made known—his teaching and example, the influence of his character and work, and of his Spirit. Cf. John xiv. 6, 'I am . . . the truth.' Submission to such an authority would involve complete separation from all that was unworthy in their former life.

A. V., following inferior MSS., adds 'through the Spirit' after 'truth.'

love of the brethren[1]: in classical Greek, of the mutual affection of actual brothers and sisters; so Ptolemy II and his sister both received the title Philadelphus, on account of their devotion to one another. The various cities named Philadelphia were so called because built by kings styled Philadelphus, or in honour of a brother or sister. The idea of the Divine Fatherhood (verse 17) implied human brotherhood. Hence *philadelphia* is used for the mutual affection between Christians by Paul (Rom. xii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9); in Heb. xiii. 1; here, cf. iii. 8, and in 2 Pet. i. 7.

love one another. Cf. ii. 1. One is a little surprised to find the Apostle putting this first, and emphasizing it. As he was writing to Christian churches suffering persecution, it might have been supposed that mutual goodwill could have been taken for granted. Evidently one cause of his anxiety was the ill-will of Christians to one another, which might go so far as to lead some to betray their brethren, and induce others to return to heathen life in order to spite Christians against whom they had grudges. In our own days men sometimes leave one church for another from similar motives. Mutual affection, on the other

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[1] φιλαδελφία.

fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible 23
seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God,
which liveth and abideth. For, 24

All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth, and the flower falleth:
But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. 25

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hand, would comfort the Christians in their trouble, and strengthen them to endure persecution. Such affection should naturally spring out of the common faith, experience, and hope; but men often grudge the self-denial and self-sacrifice which 'unfeigned love of the brethren' demands (cf. iv. 8).

from the heart fervently: after the fashion of 'unfeigned' affection. A. V. inserts 'pure,' and translates 'with a pure heart,' following some ancient authorities. The epithet is out of place here, but might easily suggest itself to scribes, perhaps as a reminiscence of 2 Tim. ii. 22, where the phrase 'from a pure heart' occurs in a suitable context.

fervently: with the faculty of loving stretched to its full energy, and therefore earnest and constant.

23. begotten again. See on verse 3.

not of corruptible seed. Cf. verses 4 and 18. The Christian is redeemed from his old life by an incorruptible ransom; his new life springs from an incorruptible seed, and he is born into an incorruptible inheritance.

through the word (*logos*): explained in 25^b as 'the word (*rema*) of good tidings which was preached unto you.' Such preaching was the occasion of the new birth. In verse 3 we have 'who . . . begat us again unto a living hope through the resurrection'—a leading topic in the preaching of the gospel.

which liveth. Cf. Heb. iv. 12, 'The word of God is living,' &c.

abideth: suggested by 25^a. The contents of the preaching, the truths of the gospel, are living, that is, they subdue and constrain that with which they come in contact; and they abide, they are eternal. Cf. on 'living hope' in verse 3. The connexion of 'abideth,' and therefore of 'living,' with 'the word' seems established by 25^a.

R. V. marg., however, translates 'The word of God who liveth and abideth.' As the Apostle will still have in mind the idea of verse 3, that it is God who 'begat us again,' he might refer to His 'living and abiding' as a further proof of the incorruptibility of the new birth. As the Greek for 'God . . . abideth' only differs

And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

2 Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile,

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in case-endings from the phrase 'the living God and steadfast' in the Greek versions of Dan. vi. 26, the words here may be a reminiscence of Daniel; and, if so, R. V. marg. is correct.

The A. V., following inferior MSS., adds 'for ever' at the end of this verse. This is a copyist's addition suggested by the 'for ever' in 25[a], and perhaps also by the fact that in Daniel the phrase is followed by 'for ever.'

24, 25[a]. This quotation is an almost exact reproduction of the LXX of Isa. xl. 6[b], 8, which, in its turn, is a sufficiently close and accurate rendering of the Hebrew. The only variation worth noticing is the substitution by Peter of 'the Lord' for the 'our God' of the Greek and Hebrew. In omitting verse 7 our Epistle probably follows the LXX, from which that verse has been accidentally dropped.

In Isaiah 'the word of the Lord' is the prophetic announcement of God's purposes and of their moral and spiritual demands, especially as regards the restoration of Israel.

The introductory 'for' translates the same Greek word as 'because' in verse 16, which see.

Instead of 'the glory thereof' (so the Hebrew), A. V. has 'the glory of man,' following inferior MSS., which have altered Peter's words to make them agree more closely with the LXX, the A.V. or current Bible of the Greek-speaking churches, as far as the O. T. was concerned. Cf. Jas. i. 10, 11.

25[b]. this is the word. The O. T. prophecies had an application to the times of the prophets, but were not thereby exhausted; hence the N. T. applies such passages to Christ (cf. on verses 11, 12).

word (*rēma*): so in both places in this verse, is a single utterance; *logos*, translated 'word' in verse 23, is a much more comprehensive and suggestive term, sometimes a continuous discourse, sometimes the reason, sometimes, as in John i. 1, the manifestation of God and the agent of His operations. Thus this verse refers to the special message of the gospel, which the word of God, His revealing of truth, makes known to man. The agents of that revealing in the present instance were the preachers who evangelized the churches of Asia Minor.

the word of good tidings which was preached unto you: *lit.* 'the word which was *evangelized*, announced as good news, unto you'; A. V., 'which by the gospel is preached unto you,' has the wrong tense, and is obscure.

1. Putting away, &c. If love is to be unfeigned, it must be

and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as 2
newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is with-

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allowed to get rid of the various vices which arise out of self-assertion and self-seeking, in the absence of affection for one's neighbours.

all: every kind of and every instance of, and so throughout the verse.

wickedness[1]**:** R. V. marg., 'malice'; see on Jas. i. 21, the inclination to injure one's neighbour.

guile[2]**:** the habit of getting the better of any one by deceit or trickery.

hypocrisies: Vatican MS., 'hypocrisy'; e.g putting the intended victim of wickedness and guile off his guard by a show of friendliness.

envies (*phthonous*). See on Jas. iv. 5.

evil speakings: slander, scandal, ill-natured gossip.

These vices, it is implied, are a survival of the old bad life, 'the body of this death' (Rom. vii. 24); their presence in the church does not reflect on Christianity, but shews that its members are only recovering slowly and partially from the disease of sin.

2. as newborn babes. Cf. i. 3, 23. Even apart from hampering survivals, the new life is still a small and feeble beginning; it needs to be disentangled from the self-absorption of the natural man, not only that the Christian may feel some affection towards his new brethren, but also that he may have an appetite for spiritual food, and desire to grow in grace. Of course a figure like this cannot be worked out in details.

newborn babes . . . milk. The same figure is used, with a difference, in 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12 f. In both these passages 'babes' and 'milk' are used almost in a bad sense; 'babes' for Christians who ought to have grown in grace, but have failed to do so; and 'milk' of the crude, imperfect teaching which is all that such Christians can receive. The contrast here is quite different between the old life and the new.

It has been argued from the use of the word 'newborn' that the Epistle must have been addressed to recent converts, and therefore not to the Pauline churches in Asia Minor, some of which had existed fifteen or twenty years[3] when 1 Peter was written, but to churches recently formed, perhaps from amongst the Jewish communities in Asia Minor. But in his use of the terms 'new birth,' 'begotten again,' &c., our author is not thinking of the recent date of the conversion of his readers, but of the complete change which it should have wrought in their life and character.

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[1] *κακία.* [2] *δόλος.*

[3] Supposing the Epistle written about A. D. 60–65.

3 out guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; if

In churches which had only existed fifteen or twenty years, during which Christianity had been spreading rapidly, a large proportion of the members must have been recent converts. Even to men who had been Christians a dozen years or more, their religion would still seem a novelty in comparison with their former heathen faith in which they had been born, and grown up, and perhaps come to middle life, and which their ancestors had held for centuries[1].

long for the spiritual milk which is without guile: the *logikon*, 'spiritual'; R.V. marg., 'reasonable'; A. V., 'of the word' (*adolon*) 'which is without guile'; A. V., 'sincere,' milk; an obscure phrase, which cannot be rendered literally. *Logikon,* the adjective from *logos*, 'word' (see on i. 23); it describes the 'milk' as connected with the 'word,' i. e. as provided by the preaching of the gospel and the grace of Christ; an idea better expressed by the A. V. 'of the word' than by the R. V. 'spiritual' (see also on next verse). The R. V. marg. 'reasonable' is a common classical sense of *logikos*, rather, however, of persons than of things, connecting with the use of *logos* for reason. *Logikos* is so translated in R. V. text in Rom. xii. 1, 'your reasonable service,' the only other place in which the word is used in the N. T. 'Reasonable' here might mean 'suitable, natural,' like 'rational' in 'rational dress'; but the context clearly requires us to connect *logikos* with the 'word' of i. 3.

which is without guile: referring back to the 'guile' of verse 1. The life of Christ in the believer fights against the desire to deceive and take unfair advantage of one's neighbours. Probably the simple, pure, wholesome character of milk suggested the epithet 'without guile.' Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 256, quotes an authority for taking *adolon* in the concrete sense of 'unadulterated.'

may grow . . . unto salvation. Growth needed continual nourishment. 'Salvation[2],' originally deliverance from physical danger, or a state of safety, is commonly used in the N. T. of the deliverance wrought by Christ. It is not thought of as something accomplished at the time of conversion, but as the mature state, into which the new life will ultimately grow, or as a gift to be bestowed when maturity is attained (i. 5); cf. Rom. xiii. 11, 'Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed'; Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling'; and, for the general idea of growth, Eph. iv. 11–15, '. . . unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness

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[1] Cf. Introduction, pp. 44 f.   [2] σωτηρία.

ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom 4
coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with

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of Christ: that we may be no longer children . . . but . . . may grow up in all things into him.'

'Unto salvation' was omitted by A. V., following inferior MSS.

3. Adapted with very slight changes from the LXX, which closely follows the Hebrew of Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'Taste and see that Jehovah is good.' The LXX, as usual, substitutes 'Lord' for Jehovah.

if: here = 'since, seeing that.'

tasted: in the various experiences of conversion and the Christian life. If their faith was at all real, it included experiences of grace which must make them long for more.

the Lord. As this is the immediate sequel to verse 2, and the figure of food is continued, the 'milk' may be identified with 'the Lord'; cf. John vi. 48, 'I am the bread of life'; 53, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves'; and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. xi. 23-29, &c. But cf. below.

gracious[1]. In the Psalm the term refers to what may be tasted and seen, and does not, therefore, describe a quality peculiar to food, but applies to Jehovah as the giver of blessings, whose goodness is known by tasting and seeing His gifts. So here also, according to the 'gracious' of the English Versions, a meaning it often has in the N. T. But both in the N. T. and the LXX, *chrestos* is used of food, in a sense also common in classical Greek, viz. 'palatable, wholesome, nourishing'—of figs in Jer. xxiv. 2, &c., of wine in Luke v. 39. Cf. also Matt. xi. 30, 'My yoke is *chrestos*,' E. V. 'easy.' Moreover, the 'and see' of the Psalm may be ignored in order to continue the figure of food consistently to the end. Hence the Vulgate translates 'how sweet the Lord is,' and this view is taken by many modern scholars.

ii. 4, 5. *Christ the corner stone.*

The true life unites us with Christ as the stones of a building with a corner stone, and makes us priests to God.

4. unto whom. In commencing a new subject, where most writers would begin a fresh sentence, Peter constantly connects with the previous clause by a relative (cf. i. 8, 10, &c.).

4-5. a living stone . . . living stones. The figure changes to the coming together of stones to a corner stone to form a building, a N. T. figure for the close and permanent union of Christians with their Master and with one another; such union can only

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[1] χρηστός.

5 God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up

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exist as the result of the mutual affection on which the Apostle is insisting. The stones of a building cannot be rightly united with and adjusted to the corner stone if they do not also fit into and support each other. Cf. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 'Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.' The figure is similarly used in 1 Cor. iii. 17, vi. 19; Heb. iii. 6.

Verses 4 and 5 are based partly upon the passage quoted in verse 6, and partly on Ps. cxviii. 22, 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.' The 'stone' in the Psalm is sometimes understood as the family of the Maccabees, which rose from obscurity to be a dynasty of high priests and kings, but is more probably to be taken as Israel. Whatever was the original reference of the verse, it was a still more appropriate description of the rejection and exaltation of Christ (cf. on verse 7).

The introduction of the epithet 'living' mingles the reality described with the figure under which it is set forth, probably to remove the impression of coldness, rigidity, and lifelessness which would have been conveyed by 'stone' without any qualification.

4. elect, precious. See on verse 6.

5. spiritual. A favourite word with Paul, but only elsewhere in the N. T. in this verse.

house. The word is also used for household (cf. Heb. iii. 4-6); as these verses are partly literal and partly figurative, Peter may have this meaning also in his mind. The 'spiritual house' is the church as the sphere of the spiritual life, the home of the spirits of the faithful, governed by the Holy Spirit.

to be a holy priesthood. Connecting better with a household than with a house; in either case, if this rendering is correct, there is a mixture of metaphors; true believers are at once temple and priesthood. Cf. John x. 9, 11, where our Lord speaks of himself, almost in the same breath, as both the door of the fold and the shepherd. The facts of the spiritual life are so marvellous and manifold that they overtax the ordinary resources of language. The mixture of metaphor remains if the alternative rendering, 'for a holy priesthood,' of R. V. marg., is adopted; the priesthood is still the general body of believers (cf. verse 9).

An inferior text, followed by A. V., has the simpler reading, 'an holy priesthood,' doubtless a correction for the sake of simplicity.

to offer up spiritual sacrifices. The function of the Israelite priests was to maintain fellowship with God by means spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in scripture, 6

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of sacrifices; they offered material sacrifices, but Christians in a spiritual temple present spiritual offerings—offerings which actually belong to the spiritual life—foremost among them being that 'unfeigned love' of which Peter has been speaking. The N. T. sets forth Christ as the one great sacrifice (Eph. v. 2; Heb. ix. 26, x. 12, 26); but the faith, thanksgiving, and consistent lives of Christians are also spoken of as sacrifices (Phil. ii. 17, iv. 18; see also next note).

acceptable to God. So Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you . . . to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable[1] to God'; Phil. iv. 18, 'having received . . . the things that come from you . . . a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God'; Heb. xiii. 16, 'to do good and to bestow alms, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased.' The same idea is also found in the O. T., e. g. Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit': cf. also 1 Sam. xv. 22, 'To obey is better than sacrifice'; and Hos. vi. 6, 'I desired kindness and not sacrifice.'

through Jesus Christ. Cf. Heb. xiii. 15, 'Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.' As nourished by the life of Christ, bound up with him, and therefore with one another, like the stones of a building with its corner-stone, we are able to make acceptable offerings.

ii. 6–8. *The stone of stumbling.*

Confirmation from the O. T. of the teaching as to the blessed future in store for believers, and the doom of unbelievers.

6. Because. Cf. i. 16, 24. The following quotation does not arise very naturally out of the sense of the context, the main connexion seems to be verbal; the use of the phrase 'elect, precious' in verse 4 led the Apostle to quote the passage from which it was taken.

it is contained in scripture (R. V. marg., 'in a scripture'): a phrase only found here in the N. T. For 'scripture' see Jas. ii. 8.

The quotation is taken from Isa. xxviii. 16, where the believer is encouraged to trust to the sure foundation-stone, laid by Jehovah in Zion, rather than to arms and diplomacy. This foundation-stone is commonly explained as 'Jehovah's relation to Israel.'

The quotation follows the LXX with some small changes and omissions. The LXX and Peter differ from the Hebrew by

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[1] 'Acceptable' in 1 Peter translates a different word from that so rendered in Romans and Philippians.

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:

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reading 'a stone elect' instead of 'a tried stone,' and 'shall not be put to shame' for 'shall not make haste.' Neither of these changes affect the suitability of the quotation. It would be equally apt in its original form or as given in the Epistle. Isa. xxviii. 16 is also quoted in Rom. ix. 33 thus, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame'; cf. also Rom. x. 11, 'Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame.' The phrase 'stone of stumbling and rock of offence' in Rom. ix. 33 is a reminiscence of Isa. viii. 14, and occurs in verse 8 of our chapter. The passages in 1 Peter and Romans are interesting examples of the freedom with which the authors of the N. T. used the language of the Old.

Probably Peter had Rom. ix. 33 before him, or in his mind, when he was writing this passage: because (1) this passage and Romans agree in some details of expression in which both differ from the LXX; (2) both combine with Isa. xxviii. 16 the phrase from Isa. viii. 14; (3) both agree in omitting certain phrases in the LXX.

It is true that where 1 Peter differs from Romans it agrees with the LXX; but Peter may have partially corrected his quotation from the LXX; or, being familiar with both the LXX and Romans, and writing from memory, he may have unconsciously combined the two.

An alternative view is that both 1 Peter and Romans are based on an edition of the LXX, differing from the one preserved in extant MSS. See also on Rom. ix. 33.

This quotation is applied to Christ because the 'stone' in the original is a symbol for the presence and Divine activity of Jehovah amongst His people, and Christ was the realization of that of which the stone was the symbol. An expositor in N. T. times would probably have said simply that 'the stone was the Messiah,' which is merely a popular statement of the same idea.

I lay: as a foundation.

a chief corner stone. In the N. T. only elsewhere Eph. ii. 20, quoted on verse 4. The exact meaning of the term in Isaiah is uncertain, 'corner stone' may be a mistranslation. The description suggests that by the 'stone' is meant a sure foundation. This may have been all Peter meant, 'chief corner stone' being reproduced from the LXX without any intention of emphasizing its exact meaning; perhaps it was not understood. It is doubtful whether the words translated 'chief corner stone' are a real Greek phrase; it may be a futile attempt to give a literal translation

And he that believeth on him shall not be put to
shame.

For you therefore which believe is the preciousness: but 7
for such as disbelieve,

The stone which the builders rejected,

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of the Hebrew, since it only occurs in the LXX, the Greek Testament, and writers commenting on either.

The corner stone is said, however, to have been important as binding together two walls, sometimes explained as Jews and Gentiles—an interesting application of the idea which might suit Ephesians, but is not suggested by the context here. The corner stones of Assyrian buildings are stated to have been specially large, conspicuous, and ornate.

elect: a misreading of the Hebrew, see above; applied to a stone it would mean 'choice'; it is used of Christ, Luke xxiii. 35.

precious[1] is used in the two senses of 'honoured' or 'honourable,' and 'valuable,' and would suggest both meanings to a Greek reader. 'Precious' is an unfortunate translation, because it suggests 'precious stones' or 'jewels,' and it is certainly not meant that the 'stone' was a jewel.

believeth on him: R.V. marg. 'it,' i.e. makes him the ground of faith, the reason for believing in God; rests faith on him as on a foundation.

7. For you . . . is the preciousness (*time*): R.V. marg., 'honour'; a term suggested by 'precious' (*entimos*), above. The stone is valuable because it is capable of rendering service, here serving as foundation or support to a building; hence our clause means, 'You are the people to whom the stone renders service, i.e. those to whom the work of Christ is a blessing.' The A.V., 'to you . . . he is precious,' fairly expresses the meaning.

R.V. marg. 'honour' is less suitable to the context, though adopted by many scholars; if adopted it would mean, 'You share the honour which Christ possesses.'

but for such as disbelieve, following Isa. viii. 14, xxviii. 16, contrasts the results of the preaching of the gospel on those who accept and those who reject. Cf. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16, 'For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved, and in them that are perishing; to the one a savour from death unto death; to the other a savour from life unto life.' The gospel is very 'dangerous' doctrine. The A.V., following some ancient MSS., has 'unto them which be disobedient.'

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[1] ἔντιμος.

The same was made the head of the corner;
8 and,
A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;
for they stumble at the word, being disobedient; where-
9 unto also they were appointed. But ye are an elect race,

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the stone, &c. Cf. on verse 4; the quotation is an exact reproduction of the LXX, which is intended for a literal translation of the Hebrew; see next note.

head of the corner. The sense of the Hebrew phrase in the Psalm is not quite certain; and the Greek, which is literally rendered by our versions, may not be an accurate translation. Peter apparently uses 'head of the corner' as equivalent to 'chief corner stone,' see on verse 6. This quotation is applied to our Lord by himself in Mark xii. 10 and parallels, and by Peter in Acts iv. 11. I have not found any evidence cited to shew that either 'chief corner stone' or 'head of the corner' were ever used as Greek phrases, otherwise than in quoting the LXX and N. T.

8. A stone of stumbling, &c. See also on verses 6, 7. The quotation reproduces the LXX's accurate rendering of the Hebrew. In the original (Isa. viii. 14) the 'stone' is Jehovah. The N. T. constantly applies to Christ what is said in the O. T. of Jehovah; this fact most strikingly illustrates the way in which its writers take for granted the deity of our Lord.

for they stumble at the word, being disobedient. Being possessed by the spirit of disobedience, and not even obeying the injunctions of the moral standard which they did recognize, Christian teaching only offended and repelled them. It is better, however, to follow R. V. marg., 'for they stumble,' i.e. at the stone, 'being disobedient to the word.' Instead of availing themselves of the blessings offered by the gospel, they refuse to submit to its influence, and so come into collision with the power and authority of Christ. At 'being disobedient' the language ceases to be figurative and becomes literal.

One might easily run up against a corner stone, the angle of two walls, or tumble over a partially exposed foundation.

whereunto: unto stumbling.

they were appointed. The figure has suggested that the stumbling naturally follows from unbelief; and the Apostle adds that such a consequence of unbelief and disobedience is 'also' part of the Divine purpose. Cf. Jude 4, 'They who were of old set forth unto this condemnation.'

ii. 9, 10. *The royal priesthood.*

The faithful, though once outside the kingdom of God, now, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own

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through His grace and to His greater glory, inherit the privileges of Israel as a nation of priests and kings, consecrated to God.

9. But ye. In these two verses, which, like the preceding, are mostly a mosaic of phrases from the O. T., the Apostle describes the character and destiny of the faithful in contrast to the doom of the disobedient. Material rewards are ignored, the special privileges of the believer are consecration to God and devotion to His service. The phrases here applied to the church are used in the O. T. of Israel: see on Jas. i. 1.

an elect race: LXX (following Hebrew) of Isa. xliii. 20; probably suggested by the 'elect stone,' and indicating the correspondence between the 'stone' and the 'house,' i.e. the church or 'race' of God's people; cf. also on i. 1.

a royal priesthood, a holy nation: LXX (following Hebrew) of Exod. xix. 6, where these distinctions are promised as the reward of obedience. The Hebrew original of the former clause is 'a kingdom of priests.' In Rev. i. 6, v. 10, Christians are styled 'a kingdom (and) priests.' Cf. Jas. ii. 5, 'Heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him.' A 'royal priesthood' would usually mean the priesthood of a royal temple, e. g. of Solomon's temple, and would be equivalent to our 'royal chaplains'; here, however, we must either (1) suppose 'royal priesthood' to mean 'priests who conduct the worship offered to Jehovah the Divine King'; or (2) 'priests of royal standing,' 'priests who are kings,' like the Maccabees. Either would suit the context; but (1) does the greater violence to the meaning of the words, and (2) is supported by the parallels quoted, and on both accounts to be preferred. Those whose wills are entirely at one with the will of God share His royal authority. For 'priests' see on verse 5; for 'holy' on i. 15. As the words for 'nation' (*ethnos*) and 'people' (in the next clause) (*laos*) are simply reproduced from the LXX, they may be considered equivalent synonyms, as the context requires.

a people for God's **own possession.** This is really the meaning of the A. V. 'a peculiar people,' where 'peculiar,' according to Elizabethan usage, has 'the sense of the Latin *peculiaris*, from *peculium*, a technical term denoting the private property which a child or slave was allowed by parent or master to possess[1].' The Greek here may be suggested by a similar phrase in Isa. xliii. 21, or by an equivalent phrase in Exod. xix. 5. These phrases occur four or five times in the O. T. of Israel, and here and in Titus ii. 14 (a phrase equivalent to, but not identical with that here) of the church.

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[1] Driver, on Deut. vii. 6.

possession, that ye may shew forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous
10 light: which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to

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shew forth, &c.: by the contrast between the holiness of their new life and the evil and selfish character of that from which they had been redeemed.

excellencies. See on 2 Pet. i. 3.

darkness . . . light: a contrast often insisted on in the Johannine books; see on 1 John i. 5–7.

10. which in time past were no people, &c. This verse is an application to the church of one of the leading ideas of Hos. i, ii (see especially i. 6–9, ii. 1, 23). Israel in its sin is to be called 'One that hath not obtained mercy,' and 'Not My people'; but there is to come a time of redemption when Israel shall be called 'One that has obtained mercy,' and 'My people.' The verse is not a quotation of Hos. ii. 23, but uses words drawn from different verses in Hos. i, ii. The description of Israel alienated from God is used of the unconverted, especially, no doubt, of Gentiles; after conversion the Christian inherits the blessings which Israel was to receive when reconciled to God.

Rom. ix. 25, 26, quotes Hos. ii. 23, i. 10, as a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles. The love that could and did reclaim those who had sinned, in spite of special privileges and enlightenment, would *a fortiori* redeem the Gentiles who had not enjoyed any such privileges.

ii. 11—iii. 12. Directions as to behaviour towards those who are not Christians.

ii. 11, 12. *Believers and unbelievers.*

General exhortation to pure life, and to honourable conduct towards those who are not Christians.

11, 12. These verses link ii. 11—iii. 12 with i. 13—ii. 10; verse 11 summarizes the latter, and verse 12 the former.

11. Beloved: introducing a main division of the letter as in iv. 12.

sojourners and pilgrims. 'Pilgrim' here translates the word rendered 'sojourner' in i. 1; 'sojourner' here corresponds to 'sojourning' in i. 17. The phrase is from the LXX of Gen. xxiii. 4, or Ps. xxxix. 12: cf. on i. 1, 17. The 'sojourner' (*paroikos*) is a person living in a foreign country where he has not the rights of a citizen, but is an 'Uitlander'; the 'pilgrim'

abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;
having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles; that, 12
wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may
by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in
the day of visitation.

(*parepidemos*) is a person staying for a time in a place which is not his permanent home. If, as is implied here, the life of the foreign country is inferior to that of the 'sojourner's' native land, he must be careful not to adopt its immoral customs (11), but yet he must behave honourably and generously towards his hosts (12).

fleshly lusts: a general term for the inclinations to self-indulgence, self-seeking, and malice denounced in i. 13—ii. 10. 'Fleshly' (*sarkikos*) is used in its Pauline sense of what belongs to the selfish impulses of human nature apart from the influence of the Spirit.

which war against the soul. 'Soul' (*psuche*) here may be man's higher nature instinct with the new life bestowed by Christ; an idea expressed by Paul by 'spirit' (*pneuma*) or 'mind' (*nous*). The selfish impulses fight against the inclination to serve and love God. Cf. Rom. vii. 23, 'I see a law . . . in my members warring against the law of my mind'; and Jas. iv. 1, 'Your pleasures that war in your members.' But 'soul' may be used here in its ordinary meaning of the personal life, whose interests are assailed by evil impulses.

12. behaviour renders the word translated 'manner of living' in i. 15, which see, and also i. 17.

seemly[1]: 'honourable,' commending itself to men's moral judgement.

Gentiles: non-Christians as opposed to Christians: a natural adaptation of the Jewish use of the word for non-Jews.

they speak against you as evil-doers. The early Christians suffered from the reckless and malignant slander in which the carnal man indulges against those who differ from him in religion; such slanders as ignorant anti-Semites circulate as to Jews, and Chinese Boxers as to Christians. The members of the primitive church were constantly charged with being bad citizens, prone to sedition, and addicted to the systematic practice of immorality, incest, the murder of children for ritual purposes, and many other vices.

which they behold: the verb corresponding to 'eyewitness' in 2 Pet. i. 16. They might hear slanderous reports, but they

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[1] καλός.

13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's
14 sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers

would see for themselves the consistent lives of the Christians with whom they were acquainted, and would find it impossible to believe such reports.

glorify God: i.e. praise the God of the Christians, and, possibly, come to believe on Him.

in the day of visitation: another phrase used for the Day of Judgement or Second Coming, only here in the N. T. The phrase is from the LXX (following the Hebrew) of Isa. x. 3, where it denotes the day when Jehovah appears to right the oppressed and punish the oppressors. Cf. also 'time of visitation' (Luke xix. 44).

ii. 13-17. *Duty to authorities.*

Be loyal subjects of the emperor, obey his representatives, and shew due deference to all authorities. Christian freedom is not licence to set at naught human law. Orderly, law-abiding lives will silence slander.

13. ordinance[1]: *lit.* 'creation,' 'creature.' A literal rendering would not make sense, and the context requires some such translation as that given by our versions and adopted by most commentators. But no other instance is cited of this use of the word, and it is not a natural modification of its ordinary meaning.

for the Lord's sake. Entire consecration to Christ does not relieve us of the duty of obeying human authorities. These are God's instruments for promoting men's welfare. Therefore we should obey for his sake, in order to co-operate with his purposes; and also because loyalty commends his gospel to all good citizens. Peter is laying down a general rule, he is not thinking of the exceptional cases in which human ordinances conflict with the dictates of the conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

the king: i.e. the Roman emperor, whose usual title in Greek was 'the king.' If the Epistle was written about A. D. 60-65, the reigning emperor was Nero (A. D. 54-68); his government of the provinces was fairly just and efficient. The districts to which the Epistle was addressed belonged to the Roman Empire.

14. governors . . . sent by him. As a matter of form, some governors were appointed by the Roman Senate, but these appointments were controlled by the emperor; and practically all the governors were his representatives.

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[1] *κτίσις.*

and for praise to them that do well. For so is the will 15
of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the
ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your 16
freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants
of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. 17
Fear God. Honour the king.

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for vengeance, &c. This, of course, was only one of the ends which the emperor had in view; the Apostle confines himself to what was relevant to his subject.

Similar injunctions to obey the authorities as 'ordained of God' to do justice are given in Rom. xiii. 1; Titus iii. 1.

15. by well-doing. The Apostle takes for granted that the Christians will be found amongst 'those who do well,' which is a very effective way of admonishing them to live worthily.

put to silence: *lit.* 'muzzle.'

ignorance of foolish men. These are slanderers referred to in verse 12; their slanders were not deliberate lies, but, being ignorant and foolish, they were eager to believe the worst of those whom they disliked.

The mention of this 'putting to silence' in the same breath with the authorities, perhaps implies that they would vindicate the innocence of the Christians. Pilate publicly declared that Christ had done no wrong (Mark xv. 14); Gallio refused to listen to the charges which the Jews brought against Paul (Acts xviii. 12-16); and, on the occasion of his last visit to Jerusalem, the Roman authorities protected him from the violence of the Jews (Acts xxii, xxiii).

16. as free, &c., has been variously connected with verses 12, 15, and 17. In any case, it really qualifies the general ideas of the paragraph. The Christian is to obey authorities, not in any servile spirit, but as a free man, whose freedom consists in loyal service to God, and therefore includes obedience to those who are doing God's work.

not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness: a caution against Antinomianism; see on 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19; Jude 3, 4. For 'wickedness' see on verse 1.

17. Honour all men: render to every one the marks of respect, deference, or courtesy which custom requires in the varied circumstances of life. This verse emphasizes the obligation to 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's' as well as 'to God the things that are God's,' by asserting the claims of all men and of the brethren, of God and the emperor, in the same breath. Cf. Prov. xxiv. 21.

Love the brotherhood: i. e. fellow Christians (i. 22, iii. 8, 18 Servants, *be* in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

iv. 8). The obligation of love to mankind in general is not explicitly stated in this Epistle, though it is in a measure implied in iii. 9. Here again the apostolic mind is not taken up with abstract principles, but with the practical needs of the situation. Relations with non-Christians would be mainly in external matters, business, &c.; hence stress is laid on the observance of the ordinary rules of conduct; there would be little opportunity for anything more. But within the church life was not to be a matter of rules, but of right feeling.

Fear God. Honour the king. 'Fear,' regard with awe and reverence, and therefore obey. Obviously, if claims to obedience conflicted, the fear due to God would override the honour due to the emperor.

Similarly Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.'

ii. 18–20. *Slaves and their masters.*

Slaves must serve their masters faithfully, even when they are gratuitously ill-treated. Patient endurance of such wrongs meets with God's approval.

18. Servants (*oiketai*): not exactly equivalent to *douloi*, 'slaves,' but strictly 'members of the household,' including both slaves, and free men and women; and not properly used of slaves employed in factories, &c. The context shews that here the word means 'household' slaves.

be **in subjection:** a special application of verse 13.

masters[1]**:** strictly, 'masters of slaves,' and so used in the parallel passages (1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; Titus ii. 9). Cf. also Eph. vi. 5, 'Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters (*kurioi*), with fear and trembling,' and the parallel passage, Col. iii. 22. In Jude 4 (which see) used of Christ.

with all fear: in verse 17, &c., a duty owing to God. Here also 'fear' is not fear of punishment at the hands of the master, but the attitude of entire submission, of anxious and careful fidelity, which would result from the consciousness that God requires the faithful discharge of duties owed to man. 'All fear': obedience and deference required by all changing circumstances.

gentle[2]**:** 'reasonable,' 'considerate.'

froward[3]**:** *lit.* 'crooked,' 'rough,' hence 'not straightforward'; here 'cruel and unjust.' Cf. our 'angular,' 'not of an even temper.'

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[1] δεσπόται. [2] ἐπιεικής. [3] σκολιός.

For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a 19
man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what 20
glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted *for it,* ye

Evil temper naturally tends to vent itself on the nearest and most helpless object.

19. acceptable[1]**:** i. e. 'before God'; A. V. has 'thankworthy,' apparently in the sense of 'acceptable,' which it uses to translate *charis* in verse 20. These renderings take *charis* in the sense of 'favour,' 'an occasion of gratitude or approval.'

The word has been taken in its ordinary N. T. sense of 'grace'; such conduct is a mark of grace.

for conscience toward God: through a conscientious sense of duty towards God. As the word rendered 'conscience[2]' sometimes means 'consciousness,' some translate 'through consciousness of God,' i. e. through a sense of duty to Him, and also through the inspiration and strength due to a consciousness of His presence.

griefs: the pain and distress caused by abuse, confinement in a slave-prison, beating, and other forms of torture. Greeks and Orientals treated their slaves, as a rule, more humanely than the Romans, but in the hands of a 'froward' master the slave's lot was deplorable anywhere. Slavery in the nineteenth century in Christian countries like the United States and Brazil was accompanied by the grossest cruelty.

20. what glory[3], &c. Patience under undeserved punishment would be exceptional and specially meritorious; Christians might take pride ('glory') in such conduct on the part of their brethren.

The parallel passages (Eph. vi. 5–9; Col. iii. 22—iv. 1) also admonish masters to treat their slaves well. The absence of such an admonition here, as in 1 Tim. vi. and Titus ii, may indicate that few of the Christians addressed owned slaves (cf. 1 Cor. i. 26, 'not many noble'), or may imply that the Apostle thought it unnecessary.

These and similar passages were used by Christian ministers and others in the Southern States of America as a scriptural justification of slavery. Obviously, however, the Apostle is not discussing the righteousness of slavery; he takes it for granted as a recognized institution, and advises slaves how to behave under existing conditions. For the admonition to endure wrong patiently, cf. Matt. v. 39, 'Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also,' and notes on that and similar passages. Here, however, we may note the Apostle speaks

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[1] χάρις. [2] συνείδησις.
[3] κλέος. Only here in the N. T.

shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer
for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with
21 God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also
suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should
22 follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile
23 found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled
not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but com-

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approvingly of the maintenance of order by magistrates (ii. 14). The slave, moreover, had no legal redress; and patience under wrongs for which there is no remedy is quite consistent with using a remedy when it exists.

acceptable. See on verse 19.

ii. 21-25. *Christ the example of patient endurance.*

Christians are called to such patient endurance of undeserved ill-treatment, because they are called to follow in the footsteps of Christ, who was sinless and yet died a cruel death. He has a right to demand this sacrifice, because he suffered on account of our sins, and thus brought us back to God, when we were wandering away to destruction.

21. called. Both the example and teaching of Christ made it plain that such sufferings would be part of the Christian life; cf. Mark viii. 34, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'; John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye have tribulation.' Cf. iii. 9.

22-25. These verses are an exposition of parts of Isa. liii, which is here applied to Christ, as in Matt. viii. 17; Mark xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37; John xii. 38; Acts viii. 32, 33; Rom. iv. 25, x. 16; Heb. ix. 28. What Isa. liii. referred to in the first instance is matter of controversy—whether Israel, or the righteous believers in Israel, or some teacher, prophet, or martyr; but it is generally recognized that the prophecy is fulfilled in Christ. Cf. iii. 18.

22. who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: taken, with very slight change from the LXX of Isa. liii. 9, as found in the Alexandrine MS.; which is a fairly close translation of the Hebrew.

23. who, when he was reviled, &c. This verse shews how the actual conduct of Christ corresponded to the description, 'there was no guile found in his mouth,' and is obviously intended to commend his behaviour in this respect as an example to the readers. This verse is specially illustrated by the incidents of the trial and Passion.

when he was reviled, &c. Cf. iii. 9.

committed himself: R. V. marg., 'his cause.'

mitted *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: who his 24
own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we,
having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by
whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray 25
like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and
Bishop of your souls.

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him that judgeth righteously: God; reminding the readers that in their case also God would vindicate and reward innocence.

24. bare our sins: from the LXX of Isa. liii. 12, slightly modified through the influence of liii. 4: cf. also liii. 11. Isa. liii. 12 is also applied to Christ in Heb. ix. 28. R. V. marg., 'carried up our sins . . . to the tree.'

in his body. Cf. Col. i. 21, 22, 'You . . . hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death'; and the clause, 'This is my body' (1 Cor. xi. 24).

the tree: the cross—the death of a criminal slave. Christ had endured the worst that could happen to the slave, for whom the Apostle wrote this paragraph.

R. V. text (= A. V.) means that Christ in his Passion took upon himself our sins, i. e. their consequences, pain, death, and humiliation; and did this 'in his body,' i. e. as an act of the Incarnation, in his human life as representing mankind.

R. V. marg., 'carried up . . . to the tree,' would mean that Christ took our sins to the cross; and, by his death and suffering as a man, removed them and the guilt and penalty attaching to them. The phrase has also been interpreted 'offered up on the cross as on an altar,' but the cross can scarcely stand for an altar, or sins for a sacrifice.

that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness: i. e. the purpose of Christ's death (not necessarily the whole purpose) was the moral reformation of character and conduct. Peter's great object in this Epistle is to induce the professing Christians whom he addresses to live worthily of the gospel; and, to this end, he urges many different considerations in various ways.

24, 25. by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep. From the LXX (following the Hebrew) of Isa. liii. 5, 6. Before they became Christians they were stray sheep.

now: since their conversion.

returned. The same verb is used in 1 Thess. i. 9 of the conversion of Gentiles, 'Ye turned unto God from idols.' 'Turned round to' gives the sense better. It does not mean that the readers had once been in true fellowship with God, 3 In like manner, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may

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had wandered away, and then at their conversion returned to Him; but that once they were wandering far off from God in a direction which led away from Him, and at their conversion they turned round, and began to move in a direction leading to Christ.

Shepherd and Bishop of your souls: Christ. 'Shepherd' is often used in the O. T. for the leaders of Israel; and sometimes for Jehovah (Pss. xxiii. 1, lxxx. 1). In the N.T. it is used of Christ (Mark xiv. 27); 'the good Shepherd' (John x. 11, 14; Heb. xiii. 20: and cf. 1 Pet. v. 4). 'Bishop' as a technical ecclesiastical term cannot be correct here for the Greek *episkopos*, but 'overseer' as R. V. marg. The word is only used of Christ here in the N.T.; it should be combined with 'Shepherd'—the Shepherd who takes charge of our souls. *Episkopos* is used of God in the LXX in Job xx. 29^b (where E. V., following the Hebrew, has 'God'), and in Wisd. of Sol. i. 6.

iii. 1-6. *Wives and husbands.*

Let wives obey their husbands, even if the husbands are not Christians; such behaviour may lead to their conversion. Let the wives be anxious to be conspicuous for a meek and quiet spirit rather than for jewels and dresses. Sarah and other holy women of the O. T. furnish an example of such conduct. Women who live holy lives and are not intimidated by the threat of persecution come to be Sarah's true daughters.

1. ye wives, be **in subjection:** another special application of ii. 13.

to your own husbands. Cf. verse 5; 1 Cor. vii. 2, &c. The 'own' is not needed, and is misleading; the Greek word *idios*, which 'own' translates, is inserted because without it the phrase might have been taken to mean 'be in subjection to men.' Peter, it will be remembered, was a married man.

even: omitted by the A. V. with the Vatican MS., &c., but found in most of the best MSS.

if any obey not the word: i. e. are not Christians (cf. ii. 8). Classical writers often speak of Greek and Roman women as given to embrace Judaism and other Eastern religions. Thus many women were converted to Christianity while their husbands remained pagan, and perhaps, in some instances, Jews. With the Greeks and Romans, as with the Jews, religious observances formed a considerable part of the routine of family life; so that the presence of Christians and non-Christians in the same family might be most embarrassing. A Christian could hardly live the ordinary domestic life of a heathen household without seeming to

without the word be gained by the behaviour of their
wives; beholding your chaste behaviour *coupled* with 2
fear. Whose *adorning* let it not be the outward adorning 3
of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of

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countenance idolatry. In a Jewish family the difficulty would be less; Jewish observances might be unnecessary, but they were not wrong.

without the word: *lit.* 'without word'; rather, 'without talking,' i.e. preaching or exhorting on the part of the wives; they were not to try to 'nag' their husbands into the church.

gained: won for Christ.

behaviour. See on i. 15.

Paul discusses the problem of a Christian married to a non-Christian in 1 Cor. vii. 10-16. Evidently the difficulties seemed to some Corinthians so great that they could only be solved by separation, while others held that, in the teeth of all difficulties, the Christian should insist on maintaining the marriage relationship, even when the non-Christian wished to separate. Paul decided against both parties. The Christian was to live with the non-Christian so long as the latter wished it, and no longer.

Neither apostle actually mentions the difficulty arising from the religious observances of a heathen household. In the case of a Christian wife it would be in some measure obviated by the comparatively secluded life of women and the existence of separate apartments for them.

History presents many striking examples of the conversion of heathen husbands through the influence of their Christian wives, e.g. Clovis, king of France, through his wife Clothilda; Ethelbert of Kent, through his wife Bertha.

On the other hand, Justin Martyr (*Second Apology*, ii) tells an interesting story of the troubles that befell the Christian wife of a heathen husband; but they arose from his drunkenness and immorality, not from his devotion to Paganism.

Obviously, the wife's 'subjection' would not involve any obligation to do wrong at her husband's bidding.

2. beholding. See on ii. 12.

chaste (*hagnos*): perhaps rather 'godly' (manner of life), such as is described in verses 3 and 4. Cf. on i. 22, and Jas. iii. 17.

fear. See on ii. 18.

3. not . . . the outward adorning, &c. This verse clearly does not forbid plaiting the hair or wearing jewels any more than putting on apparel; but in a genuine Christian woman any attractiveness derived from dress and ornaments will be trifling compared to the winsomeness of Christian character.

4 putting on apparel; but *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible *apparel* of a meek and quiet
5 spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who

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4. the hidden man of the heart. This is the adorning to be aimed at, in contrast to mere outward ornaments. 'Man' here = 'human being.' We might paraphrase, 'The real self, hidden in the heart and soul.' Cf. Rom. ii. 28, 29, 'For he is not a Jew, which is one in what is manifest; neither is that circumcision, which is in what is manifest in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one in what is hidden; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter'; also Paul's contrast between 'the inward man' and 'the outward man' (Rom. vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16).

incorruptible apparel, which will not wear out like dress and jewels, and is never out of fashion. Cf. i. 4, 7, 18, 22.

a meek and quiet spirit has been well explained as 'the spirit which neither worries other people nor allows itself to be worried'; a suitable spirit for a woman 'in subjection' (verse 1). 'Meek' (*praüs*), 'mild,' 'gentle,' used in the LXX for a word which came to be synonymous with 'faithful worshipper of Jehovah'; elsewhere in the N.T. only three times—twice of Christ (Matt. xi. 29, xxi. 5), and once in the Beatitude, 'Blessed are the meek' (Matt. v. 5). The corresponding quality, 'meekness,' is frequently commended by Paul. 'Quiet': see quotation from 1 Timothy below.

which is in the sight of God of great price. Dress could only appeal to men, character would commend them to God. But, as the Apostle is specially dealing with their relation to their husbands, he may also have in mind that showy dress is a bid for general admiration, while the graces of speech and conduct which spring from a 'meek and quiet spirit' would be most obvious in family life.

Similar advice to wives is given in Eph. v. 22–24; Col. iii. 18; Titus ii. 4, 5. The closest parallel is the advice to women generally in 1 Tim. ii. 8–12, 'I desire . . . that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or raiment of great price (cf. 1 Pet. iii. 3); but through good works. Let a woman learn in quietness (1 Pet. iii. 4) with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach (1 Pet. iii. 1^b), nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.'

5. the holy women: scarcely, as often explained, the women of ancient Israel, 'holy' as belonging to the Chosen People; but probably the wives of the patriarchs and other notable women,

hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection
to their own husbands : as Sarah obeyed Abraham, call- 6
ing him lord : whose children ye now are, if ye do well,
and are not put in fear by any terror.

'holy' through the special relation of their husbands to God. In the next verse, Sarah's respectful mode of addressing Abraham is given as a proof of this statement. Speaking generally, however, the women of the O. T. do not seem remarkable for 'a meek and quiet spirit'; remember Sarah's dealings with Hagar, Rebecca's deception of Isaac, and the quarrels between Rachel and Leah. Nevertheless, as a matter of form, at any rate, they were 'in subjection to their husbands,' and so far legitimate examples for the women of the primitive church.

6. calling him lord : Gen. xviii. 12.

whose : Sarah's ; the Greek word is feminine.

are : *lit.* 'became,' or, according to English idiom, 'are become' (so R. V. marg.), i. e. by becoming Christians ; so Rom. iv. 9–25, e. g. 17, 18, 'Abraham . . . the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee)'; Gal. iii. 28, 29, 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one man in Jesus Christ. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed.' Sarah is taken as the type of godly women, as Abraham of godly men ; and so, in every race, the Christian man is the spiritual son of Abraham, and the Christian woman the spiritual daughter of Sarah.

if ye do well : so far as you live consistent lives. This spiritual succession is not a mere matter of Christian profession, which may be as purely outward as jewels and dress.

R. V. margin makes this and the following clause qualify 'holy women' in verse 5, and places the reference to Sarah in brackets as a parenthesis, thus : 'the holy women . . . who hoped in God . . . being in subjection to their own husbands (as Sarah obeyed Abraham : whose children ye are become), doing well and not being afraid,' &c. Cf. next note.

are not put in fear by (R. V. marg., 'afraid with') **any terror.** A reference to Prov. iii. 25 (LXX, following Hebrew), addressed to the man who 'keeps sound wisdom and discretion' (21), thus : 'Be not put in fear by sudden terror,' &c. (26). For Jehovah shall be thy confidence.' 'Terror[1]' is properly the emotion of fear, as violent agitation, so that the clause would mean 'not allowing yourselves to be prostrated and distracted by fear.' Here it is sometimes taken to mean 'object of fear,' thus : 'Let no threats or dangers terrify you.' The sense in either

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[1] *πτόησις.* Only here in the N. T.

7 Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the

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case may be that a Christian woman is not to be frightened out of a godly life by the prospect of ill-treatment at the hands of her husband. The husband in Justin Martyr's story[1] denounced his wife to the authorities as a Christian, because she left him on account of his evil life. The reference, however, may be to the general danger of persecution.

According to R. V. margin this clause refers to the 'holy women' of ancient Israel. If so, it will mean that, living a godly life, they trusted in God, and their trust was justified by the Divine protection; e. g. the deliverances of Sarah and Rebecca in Egypt and at Gerar (Gen. xii, xx, xxvi), when they had got into difficulties through obeying their husbands.

iii. 7. *Husbands and wives.*

On the other hand, let husbands be reasonable and considerate towards their wives, in view of their needs as weak and dependent, and their claims as fellow Christians. Such conduct is a necessary condition of true fellowship with God.

7. Ye husbands. This verse is not another application of ii. 13, but an appendix to the previous paragraph, guarding against any abuse of its teaching.

in like manner: with the same loyal recognition of all just claims. The spirit which made the wife 'meek and quiet' would make the husband kind and attentive.

according to knowledge: the true spiritual enlightenment, which would be aware of the needs and claims of the wife, and would regard them as sacred obligations; see on 2 Pet. i. 2, 5.

honour. The wife, though 'in subjection,' had her dues; and 'Honour all men,' in ii. 17, directed that they should be recognized.

as unto the weaker vessel. 'Vessel' (*skeuos*) is sometimes used figuratively of the body as the instrument and vessel of the soul; and so, like our 'body,' might come to mean 'person'; and the phrase would simply mean 'the weaker of the two.' But here and in 1 Thess. iv. 4 'vessel' is commonly taken as meaning 'wife in relation to husband,' and vice versa. To the Christian, such weakness is a claim on his courtesy and kindness. Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 12-31, especially 24^{b}, 'God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked.'

Probably, however, we should translate, 'dwell with the woman as the weaker vessel according to knowledge, giving honour (to grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

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[1] See p. 223.

Finally, *be* ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as 8
brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: not rendering 9

them) as being,' &c. In the Greek, 'giving honour' immediately precedes 'as being,' &c. The practical difference in the teaching is very slight.

joint-heirs of the grace of life. Husband and wife were fellow Christians, redeemed by the same ransom, living by the same grace, looking forward to the same inheritance, therefore the wife was obviously worthy of all honour. Some ancient MSS. read 'manifold grace of life'; in iv. 10 we have 'the manifold grace of God.' Apparently the case of a Christian married to a non-Christian wife is not considered; the latter would hardly be called an 'heir of the grace of life.'

your prayers: either the husbands', or the prayers of both husbands and wives.

hindered. The spirit which makes a man harsh and overbearing towards the weak would hinder his fellowship with God, and might disturb the wife's faith.

Similar admonitions to husbands are found in Eph. v. 25; Col. iii. 19.

iii. 8–12. *Recapitulation.*

Summary of ii. 11—iii. 12, concluding with an appropriate quotation from the O.T. Let the Christians be united by mutual affection; and when reviled and persecuted, let them not retaliate but return good for evil, that they may attain to their inheritance of blessing.

8. Finally: by way of conclusion and summary.

all. The previous paragraphs have dealt with special classes—slaves, wives, husbands; the summary addresses all these, and those of other classes as well.

likeminded: A. V., 'of one mind.' Only here in the N. T.

compassionate (*sumpatheis*): R. V. marg., '*Gr.* sympathetic'; A. V., 'having compassion one of another'; only here in the N. T. The corresponding verb is used in Heb. iv. 15, 'We have not a high priest that cannot be *touched-with-the-feeling-of*[1] our infirmities.' 'Compassionate' suggests that the person who feels compassion is in a superior position, and the Greek does not imply this, so that 'sympathetic' ('entering into each other's feelings,' 'feeling for and with one another') is better.

loving as brethren. See on i. 22.

humbleminded. A. V. has 'courteous, translating a reading

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[1] συμπαθῆσαι.

evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should
10 inherit a blessing. For,

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meaning literally 'friendly-minded,' which is found in inferior MSS. Cf. v. 5.

9. not rendering evil for evil. So also Rom. xii. 17 (see below); 1 Thess. v. 15.

or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing. Cf. 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13, 'Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we intreat.' Cf. also Luke's version[1] of the Sermon on the Mount, vi. 27–38, especially 28, 'Bless them that curse you[2].'

Verses 8, 9ᵃ have many points of contact with Rom. xii. 9–21; thus 10, 'In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honour preferring one another.' 14, 'Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not.' 15, 'Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.' 16, 'Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly.' 17, 'Render to no man evil for evil.'

The renewed injunction to 'love the brethren' (i. 22), and to mutual love generally, takes us back to a previous section, and further illustrates Peter's habit of knitting together the different divisions of his letter by cross-references.

In verse 8 the first three epithets, 'likeminded,' 'having fellow-feeling,' 'loving as brethren,' shew that here the Apostle has in mind the mutual relations of Christians. But he would, of course, have wished his readers to be 'tender-hearted,' &c., to non-Christians when opportunity arose.

9ᵇ. for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. Cf. ii. 21 and note the twofold nature of the Christian calling—to unmerited persecution and to blessing. Our clause = 'You were called to inherit a blessing.'

'For' here implies the very striking thought that to bless and to be blessed are inseparably connected. The spirit which blesses even persecutors is a necessary condition of inheriting a blessing; and conversely the heirs of blessing are inevitably moved to bless, even those at whose hands they have suffered. Such 'blessing' would involve a desire for the salvation of its object, and the desire would lead to prayer and other practical efforts. Instead of 'for,' A. V., with inferior MSS., has 'knowing that.'

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[1] There is less similarity with Matthew's version.

[2] This clause is included in the A. V. of Matt. v. 44, following inferior MSS. It was not originally part of Matthew, but was introduced by some scribe from Luke.

He that would love life,
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips that they speak no guile:
And let him turn away from evil, and do good; 11
Let him seek peace, and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, 12
And his ears unto their supplication:
But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of 13

10-12. The quotation is from the LXX (following the Hebrew) of Ps. xxxiv. 12-16, with slight changes.

10, 11. Refraining from evil-speaking ('reviling') and turning away from evil (and therefore from 'rendering evil for evil') are here express conditions of obtaining life and seeing good days (inheriting a blessing).

11. Those who seek peace will be 'likeminded,' &c.

12. the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, &c., so that they may be sure that his promises will be kept; and, also, that when he lays down conditions, he will see that they are fulfilled.

iii. 13—iv. 11. Exposition of the blessedness of suffering for Christ.

iii. 13, 14ᵃ. *Blessedness of suffering for Christ.*

Statement of the subject. Under ordinary conditions the upright man remains unmolested; but persecution may arise, and if so it is blessed to suffer for righteousness' sake.

13. who is he that will harm you? Cf. LXX of Isa. l. 9, 'Behold the Lord will help me, who will harm me?' (Hebrew, as R.V., 'who is he that shall condemn me?') 'Harm[1]' in the N.T. only elsewhere in Acts (five times), of the oppression of the Israelities by the Egyptians (vii. 6, 19); of the persecution of the Christians by Herod (xii. 1).

As usual in this Epistle, the opening sentence of a new section springs immediately out of the close of the preceding. Seeing that the Lord has promised prosperity to the righteous (10, 11), and is always closely observing men (12), how can any evil happen to those who are set on doing right? The conclusion seems obvious and necessary, that no one can harm them; but

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[1] *κακοῦν*, 'cause evil to.'

14 that which is good? But and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed *are ye*: and fear not their

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nevertheless seems also quite at variance with experience. This sentence is specially remarkable as addressed to those who had suffered (i. 6) and were likely to suffer persecution. It is commonly explained as equivalent to 14^{a}, and thus meaning that, though their persecutors might take away their property, and torture and put to death both them and their families, they could do them no real harm. Cf. Luke xii. 4, 'Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' Such teaching is included in 14^{a}, but is probably only one aspect of the truth which the Apostle meant to convey in verse 13. The general tone of the Epistle suggests that the Christians addressed were in great fear of persecution, but that the Apostle thought they overrated their danger, and in their terror forgot that there was a protecting Providence. Peter himself is much more anxious lest that should be a failure of Christian conduct. Verse 13 therefore means, 'Do not forget that God protects His people, and that, if you fall away into sin, you forfeit that protection. You may draw down ill-treatment upon yourselves by being abusive, over-reaching, and dishonest; but don't call it persecution.'

zealous: A. V., 'followers,' translating inferior MSS. whose reading is literally 'imitators.'

14^{a}. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake. The Greek idiom implies that it is not likely that they would suffer thus; not that it was wholly improbable that such cases would occur, but that to suffer persecution would be a rare experience.

blessed are ye: *lit.* 'happy are ye,' not merely in spite of, but even because of, persecution. Persecutors were not only powerless to injure the faithful, but their attempts to do so actually brought happiness to those whom they ill-treated. Cf. ii. 19, 20, iv. 14, and Matt. v. 11, 'Blessed are ye when men shall . . . persecute you.' The teaching of verses 13 and 14^{a} may be paraphrased thus: 'No one shall harm you; God will prevent any suffering or loss which would be harmful; when He allows you to be persecuted, you will eventually be all the happier for the experience.'

'Ye trembling saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on your head.'

iii. 14^{b}–16. *How to meet opposition.*

Therefore do not be afraid; but consecrate yourselves to Christ; be prepared to give a courteous and intelligent answer to those

fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts 15
Christ as Lord: *being* ready always to give answer to

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who ask you concerning the grounds of your faith; and let your arguments be reinforced by the testimony of a consistent life, by which all slanders will be refuted. In other words, let your Christianity be bold and confident, because it is genuine, rational, and practical.

14^a, 15^b. fear not their fear, &c. An application of the LXX (which follows the Hebrew) of Isa. viii. 12, 13, 'Fear not its [Judah's] fear, neither be troubled; the Lord, him do ye sanctify, and he shall be thy fear.' In Isaiah the prophet is forbidden to share the hopes and fears of the people amongst whom he lived, he is to fear God and hope in Him. Here the sense is different, 'Do not yield to the fear with which the enemies of the faith seek to possess your souls.'

15. sanctify: 'make holy'; see on i. 2, 15. Isa. viii. 13^a means, 'Make Jehovah the sole object of your worship, faith, and fear.'

in your hearts: not merely in outward profession.

Christ as Lord: the analogy of the LXX suggests rather 'the Lord Christ'; cf. Luke ii. 11, 'Christ the Lord.' In either case the use made by the Apostle of Isa. viii. 13 expressly identifies Christ with the Jehovah of the O. T. This point is lost by the A. V. which, following inferior MSS., has 'sanctify the Lord God.'

ready . . . to give answer. The Epistle does not direct the Christians to initiate evangelistic work; it constantly implies that there was a keen popular interest in Christianity. Persecution could not have arisen until the faith had attracted public attention; and, on the other hand, there is no advertisement like persecution. The gospel was then a novelty, and religious and philosophical questions excited far more interest amongst the general populace in Greek and Greek-speaking Oriental cities than they do amongst the masses in the West. Hence, under the circumstances of the time, the most efficacious way of making converts was to commend the faith by godly living, good-temper under abuse, and constancy in persecution, and to deal wisely with spontaneous inquirers.

answer (*apologia*): strictly a speech made by a prisoner in his defence, and so used of Paul's speech to the hostile Jewish mob at Jerusalem, Acts xxii. 1; also Acts xxv. 16 (R. V., 'defence'); and of Paul's defence when tried at Rome, 2 Tim. iv. 16. So Plato's *Apology* is in the form of a speech made by Socrates in his defence when tried for his life. Later on *Apologia* came to be the title of treatises written in defence of the Christian faith. Hence the science of Christian evidences is styled 'Apologetics': this verse might serve for its motto.

every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope
16 that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a
good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against,
they may be put to shame who revile your good manner
17 of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God

The use of the term here implies that the inquirers would be critical or even hostile. Current slanders had put Christianity on its defence.

always . . . to every man. A most exacting demand upon the Apostle's readers. The 'answer' which was to be so universally available must have been brief, simple, and—from the Christian standpoint—obviously convincing; a few main facts about Christ, perhaps also the few great religious truths which prove themselves to men of spiritual discernment, and, certainly, the personal experience of the answerer.

asketh you a reason: better, 'calleth you to account.' 'Reason' is for *logos*, the 'word' of ii. 8, iii. 1, &c., but here 'account,' as in iv. 5, 'give account.' The 'calling to account' would often take the form of remonstrances on the folly of the Christian's ideas.

concerning the hope that is in you. The expectation of the glorification of Christ, of deliverance from sin and suffering, and of admission to the perfect bliss of intimate fellowship with God; an expectation that took shape for a time in the picturesque imagery of an immediate second coming, but was more worthily realized in the future life. To outsiders, the Christian hope was at once the most attractive and the most absurd feature of the faith, and would therefore be a frequent subject of inquiry.

with meekness and fear: see on iii. 4 and ii. 18. The contempt and ridicule which many of the 'inquirers' poured upon the faith made it very difficult for Christians to keep their temper and refrain from abuse. Hence there was great need for these graces; the 'fear' of God, the sense of a Divine presence, would keep them calm and courteous.

16. wherein ye are spoken against. The charge against the Christians was not merely that their religious views were unsound, but that their morals were bad, ii. 12; and to this also they were to be 'ready always to give answer,' even to masters or husbands, who were intimately acquainted with their lives; hence the need of a good conscience. A. V., with some ancient authorities, has 'whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers.'

manner of life: see on i. 15.

in Christ. The slanders against Christians reflected on the character and claims of Christ.

should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the 18 righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in

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iii. 17, 18. *Christ our example.*

Christ an example of the suffering of the innocent, of the salvation which such suffering may bring to others, and of the future blessedness of the sufferers.

17. For it is better . . . that ye suffer for well-doing. The defence of the Christians might be logically complete, they might demonstrate the reasonableness of their faith, and vindicate their innocence, and yet they might suffer. Men are not often conciliated by being beaten in argument and put to shame as slanderers, and persecution is the natural weapon of those who are conscious that they are in the wrong. But it was better, especially for the cause of Christ, that they should suffer thus than that they should provoke ill-treatment by bad behaviour.

if the will of God should so will. The Greek, as in verse 14 (which see), implies that such suffering was not likely to be a common experience. The two 'wills' emphasize afresh the truth that the righteous suffer only when and as the Lord wills; cf. verses 12-14.

18. Christ also suffered: cf. ii. 21-25. For 'suffered' (*epathen*), which may be borrowed from ii. 21, we should probably read with some ancient MSS. 'died' (*apethanen*); in any case the reference is to the Passion.

In the Passion, the highest 'well-doing' seemed to be rewarded by the most terrible suffering; yet it was justified by the redemption of mankind. The Apostle's readers might be sure that their sufferings also would minister to the working out of that redemption.

put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. The former clause refers to the Passion, the latter to the Resurrection. But Peter does not mean that the spirit had no share in the Passion; nor does he mean that the flesh had no share in the Resurrection, i.e. that there was no resurrection of the body. There is a contrast between the limited and subordinate nature of the suffering, and the infinite glory and power of Christ in his exaltation. His death was brought about by natural causes, and was an ordinary feature of the human life which he shared with other men; but his resurrection was supernatural (in the spirit[1]); it was connected with the unique spiritual endowments of Christ; cf. verse 19 and i. 11. It was different, for instance, from the

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[1] Cf. 1 Cor. x. 4, where the manna is styled 'spiritual meat.'

19 the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the

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raising of Lazarus: that only recalled him to ordinary human life; the resurrection of Christ restored him to his unique spiritual exaltation, and enabled him to bring to God those who believed on him. Cf. on i. 3.

Great, therefore, as were the sufferings of Christ, they prepared the way for a more than adequate recompense; there need be no fear that the lesser sufferings of his followers would be in vain.

The A. V. has 'quickened by the spirit,' but the analogy of 'in the flesh' clearly requires 'in the spirit.'

iii. 19, 20. *Christ and the spirits in prison.*

A special example of the blessed consequences of the suffering of Christ, his offer of salvation to 'the spirits in prison.'

19. in which: in the spirit, as distinguished from his human life; therefore at some period other than that life.

he went and preached unto the spirits in prison: cf. on iv. 6. The natural meaning of this sentence is that Christ offered salvation to beings in Hades (either fallen angels or (iv. 6) the unsaved of former generations) other than men living the ordinary human life on earth.

The further interpretation of the passage is a hopeless riddle. It is vague in itself, and evidently takes for granted some familiar tradition which is now lost. Even the above explanation is challenged, rather however on theological than on critical grounds.

The interpretation of almost every word in the sentence, and of all the implied circumstances, are matters of controversy. The chief points at issue are (*a*) the time and place of the preaching, (*b*) the subject of the preaching, (*c*) the persons preached to (the spirits), (*d*) the result of the preaching, (*e*) the meaning of 'in the spirit.' The views as to (*a*) largely determine the general interpretation. The following are some of the leading expositions of the verse:—

(i) Christ went and preached 'in the spirit' by inspiring Noah or Enoch (cf. i. 11) as the actual speaker to exhort the wicked generation just before the Flood. They are called 'the spirits in prison,' i. e. in Hades by anticipation, because they went to Hades at the time of the Flood, and were there when Peter wrote the Epistle. The subject of the preaching was the imminence of the Flood and the need of repentance; and the preaching was a failure—all of which seems quite irrelevant to the context.

This view has been held by various scholars from Augustine till the present time.

(ii) A few commentators have explained that Christ went and preached 'in the spirit' by inspiring the apostles after his Ascension to preach the gospel to the Jews or Gentiles or both, spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when 20

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whose 'spirits' were 'in the prison' of sin, like the antediluvians.

(iii) The most common view is that our Lord descended to Hades, the place of spirits after death, to preach to its inhabitants. But those who hold or have held this view are very much divided as to time, &c.

(*a*) *Time.* The preaching may have taken place either (1) before the Incarnation; (2) between the Passion and the Resurrection; or (3) after the Ascension. The second is the more probable. The 'preaching' is mentioned after the Passion, verse 18 'put to death,' and before the Ascension, verse 22. It is bracketed, as it were, with the Resurrection; both happened 'in the spirit,' i. e. were independent of the human life assumed at the Incarnation. Christ, as it has been said, while his body was in the tomb, was, like other dead, merely a spirit; but, unlike other spirits, he had energy; and so just as when a man he preached to men, so when a spirit he preached to spirits. Some such view is implied by the Apostles' Creed, 'He descended into hell,' i. e. Hades. That this is the meaning of 'prison' is shown from the parallels in 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6; unless 'prison' is a lower depth than Hades, specially provided for special sinners.

(*b*) *The subject of the preaching.* According to some, Christ announced to the wicked their certain doom, the example serving to illustrate the suffering of evil-doers, verse 17. But the immediate context is not occupied with this topic; so that it seems better to understand that the preaching was an offer of salvation. This is quite in the line of thought; Peter is illustrating the blessed consequences of the suffering of the innocent, one of which, according to this view, would be that Christ, after his Passion, offered salvation to the spirits in Hades. Another view, that he declared to the righteous dead the accomplishment of their salvation, might supplement but not supersede the preceding.

(*c*) *The persons preached to.* (1) The parallels in 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6 (which see), suggest that 'the spirits in prison' are the fallen angels of Gen. vi. Fallen men had their opportunity in the Levitical worship and the preaching of the gospel; it was natural that Christ's work should also include an offer of salvation to the fallen angels. The same line of thought, however, would further require that some express provision should have been made for those who knew nothing either of the law or the gospel. Nevertheless, there was no reason why Peter should exhaust the subject.

(2) It has been held that the 'spirits in prison' are the righteous dead, to whom Christ announced that their redemption had been

wrought out for them. This is unlikely in every way, especially in view of the reference to the antediluvians.

(3) The 'spirits in prison' are commonly identified, according to what seems the natural interpretation of verse 20, with the unbelieving generation who perished in the Flood. There is no satisfactory reason why they should have been singled out for this exceptional privilege, possibly as representatives of those who are cut off before their time, without full opportunity of repentance, yet 'the long-suffering of God . . . in the days of Noah' can only have waited for men, not for the fallen angels; they surely could not be drowned.

It is difficult to decide between (1) and (3); and the difficulty is enhanced by the fact that the decision seriously affects the teaching of the Bible as to the possibility of redemption after death. The adoption of (3) implies that Peter believed that in one instance, at any rate, the proffer of salvation had been made to men after death. Hence the exposition of this passage is apt to be influenced by the theological predilections of the expounder.

(*d*) *The result of the preaching.* This is not mentioned; but, if we suppose the preaching addressed to the fallen angels, or to the spirits of men who had not attained salvation during their lifetime, it must be implied that the preaching was successful, otherwise it could not be mentioned among the blessed results of Christ's suffering.

The source of Peter's information. The very obscurity and ambiguity of the passage show that the Apostle is not announcing a new truth, but referring to some narrative familiar to himself and his readers. No such narrative, which could have existed in Peter's time, is now extant. Early Christian literature contains a very large number of references to the 'descent into hell'; but they are largely imaginative expansions of the present passage: and it is very difficult to be certain that any of their statements rest on primitive tradition independent of 1 Peter.

According to some of the Fathers, however, there was a passage in the O. T. which, according to the exegesis of the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, would certainly have been regarded as a prediction of the descent into Hades. Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho a Jew*, chaps. 71, 72, alleges that the Jews had removed from the O. T. many passages which would have testified to the truth of Christianity; thus he states that 'From the sayings of . . . Jeremiah these have been cut out: "The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them His own salvation."' The words which Justin states were cut out are quoted four times by Irenæus, once as from Jeremiah[1], once as from Isaiah[2], once as the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,

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[1] IV. xxxvi. [2] III. xxii.

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from a prophet[1], and once as said by others[2]. Irenæus applies the words to Christ as a proof of his divinity and of his descent into Hades.

Justin's statement that this and other passages had been cut out by the Jews is generally rejected. It is more likely that Christian scribes interpolated them into some MSS. of the O. T. The passage cited may have been constructed on the basis of 1 Pet. iii. 19. It should be noted, however, that nothing is said in it about Noah or the Flood.

There are two passages in the Pauline Epistles which are sometimes supposed to refer to this subject. In Eph. iv. 9 we read, 'He descended into the lower parts of the earth'; but this may merely refer to the Incarnation, the descent to the earth. Again, Col. i. 20 speaks of Christ 'reconciling . . . things in the heavens.' In the Slavonic *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, the fallen angels are confined in a prison in the Second Heaven. This may represent a current idea known to Paul, and by the 'things in heaven' which needed 'reconciling' he may mean the fallen angels[3].

The clause 'descended into hell,' in the so-called Apostles' Creed, is not found in all the ancient copies of that creed, and probably was not part of it in its older editions. The clause has no equivalent in the Nicene Creed.

Rabbinical passages are quoted[4] which speak of the prisoners in Gehenna as rejoicing at the sight of the Messiah, and rising from hell with the Shechinah, the manifestation of the Divine presence, at their head.

The descent into Hades in early Christian literature outside the N. T. The descent of Christ into Hades to preach to the spirits of the dead was a favourite subject with early Christian writers, whose luxuriant imagination liberally enriched and embellished the meagre statements of Scripture.

20. disobedient: either because they, the fallen angels or the antediluvians, committed sins which broke God's moral law, or because the antediluvians refused to listen to Noah when he urged them to repent: cf. on 'preacher of righteousness,' 2 Pet. ii. 5.

the long-suffering of God waited. The reference is to an interpretation of Gen. vi. 3 which was prevalent when 1 Peter was written, and is still held by many scholars; according to which 'yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years' meant that the antediluvian race should be allowed to exist for another hundred and twenty years before it was swept away by the Flood.

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[1] V. xxxi. [2] IV. lv. [3] So Charles, *Secrets of Enoch*, p. xli.
[4] Weber and Kühl, in loco.

while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight
21 souls, were saved through water: which also after a true

Thus the Targum of Onkelos[1] translates Gen. vi. 3: 'Jehovah said, This evil generation shall not abide before me for ever: . . . a respite of an hundred and twenty years shall be given them to see if they will repent'; and the LXX has: 'My spirit shall not abide in these men for ever.'

The delay experienced by the Christians in the manifestation of the Divine justice was illustrated by the similar delay before the Flood; both were due to God's forbearance; both would issue in vindication of that justice by the punishment of the disobedient and the deliverance of believers.

through water: A. V., 'by water,' perhaps simply means 'at the time of the Flood,' or 'passing through water.' There may possibly be the somewhat subtle idea that while the waters drowned the wicked, the righteous were saved through the water carrying the ark on its surface. A rabbinical tradition says that, although Noah built the ark, he did not believe that there would be a flood, and would not enter the ark till he was driven into it by the rising water. Thus he would be saved by the water sending him into the ark. But it is not likely that any such legend underlies Peter's words; but cf. note on next verse.

iii. 21, 22. *Baptism.*

The Flood a type of baptism, the value of which does not lie in the physical cleansing, but in that which is symbolized thereby, the regeneration of the soul through the risen and exalted Christ.

21. which also after a true likeness: *lit.* as the R. V. marg., 'which in the antitype . . . baptism.' The general meaning obviously is that the experience of Noah and his family in passing through the water to ultimate safety was typical of the Christian experience of passing through the water of baptism to salvation. It is not very clear exactly how this sense is to be got from the actual words, and we cannot discuss the matter here, as it involves details of Greek grammar. The point of the figure is not very evident beyond the bare parallel that both the Flood and baptism were preliminary conditions of deliverance; in 1 Cor. x. 2 the passage of the Red Sea is spoken of as a baptism. Both passages seem to see in baptism a symbol of the spiritual storm and stress of the passage from a state of sin into the kingdom of God.

The term 'antitype' only occurs elsewhere in the N. T. in Heb. ix. 24, R. V.: 'like in pattern.'

In the A. V. here, 'The like figure whereunto,' 'whereunto' is from late MSS.

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[1] An Aramaic or Chaldee translation of the Pentateuch, compiled in the second century A. D.

likeness doth now save you, *even* baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection

not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. Christian baptism did not, like the Jewish ceremonial washings or baptisms, consist in the removal of any material uncleanness contracted by contact with unclean substances.

but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God. This is an unintelligible rendering of a very obscure and ambiguous passage; perhaps the Revisers intended to indicate that it was impossible to make sense of the Greek. 'Interrogation[1]' only occurs here in the N. T.; in the LXX of Dan. iv. 17 it is used in the sense of 'demand.' The corresponding verb is often used in the N. T. for 'ask a question'; and once for 'request' in Matt. xvi. 1: 'The Pharisees and Sadducees . . . requested him to show them a sign from heaven.' As alternatives, therefore, to 'interrogation' or 'asking a question' we have 'request' or 'requesting,' and—as it is maintained by some on the strength of a usage in mediæval or Byzantine Greek—'pledge.'

(*a*) Taking 'interrogation,' we have the R. V. (above); 'inquiry,' &c., &c., R. V. marg. But the idea of a baptized person or his conscience asking questions of or as to God is curious in itself and alien to the context. Neither the Greek nor the context support the rendering, 'the asking after, search after God,' or the R. V. marg., 'the appeal of a good conscience,' &c.

(*b*) 'The pledge,' &c., would refer to baptismal vows, but the Byzantine usage was probably not current in the Apostle's time, and it is not clear that our word was really used even in Byzantine times for pledge.

(*c*) The A. V., 'the answer of a good conscience,' makes very good sense, but cannot be the meaning of the Greek.

(*d*) We are, therefore, shut up to 'request.' With this sense of the word we might translate, 'the request which a good conscience makes to God'; but this is too vague; we should expect to be told what the good conscience requests. Hence we should render, 'the request which the baptized person makes for a good conscience towards God.' As regards fellow men, baptism is a symbol of Christian discipleship; as regards God, it is a request for grace to live so as to have a good conscience.

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The punctuation of the A. V. connects this clause with 'baptism . . . doth now save us,' treating the intervening words as a parenthesis. It may

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[1] ἐπερώτημα.

22 of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

4 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm

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also qualify the preceding clause. The R. V. reproduces the ambiguity of the Greek. The Resurrection is the source of life and righteousness, partly because it was the immediate occasion of the foundation of the church, and partly because it enabled believers to enter into fellowship with the risen and living Christ. Cf. i. 3.

This reference to the Resurrection resumes the description of the experiences of Christ from verses 18, 19.

22. on the right hand of God. The place of honour; in 1 Kings ii. 19 the queen-mother sits at the right hand of Solomon. Christ is often spoken of as sitting at the right hand of the Father, Luke xxii. 69; Acts vii. 55, 56; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3, viii. 1, x. 12, xii. 2. The figure is borrowed from Ps. cx. 1: 'Jehovah saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand.' According to the Messianic application of that Psalm current in the N. T. times, 'my lord' was the Messiah. Hence the verse is applied to Christ in Mark xii. 36 and parallels (by Christ himself), Acts ii. 34; Heb. i. 13.

having gone into heaven: i. e. at the Ascension, in the account of which (Acts i. 10, 11) the Greek word used here for 'gone' occurs twice.

angels and authorities and powers: i. e. various classes of angels. Cf. on Jude 8.

being made subject. The subjection of all things to Christ is announced in 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Phil. iii. 21; and Heb. ii. 8, in connexion with quotation from Ps. viii. 7.

Verses 18-22 set forth a threefold activity of Christ; in verse 18, he redeems man by his Passion on the earth; in verse 19, he preaches to the 'spirits in prison'; in verse 22, he receives the submission of the angels in heaven.

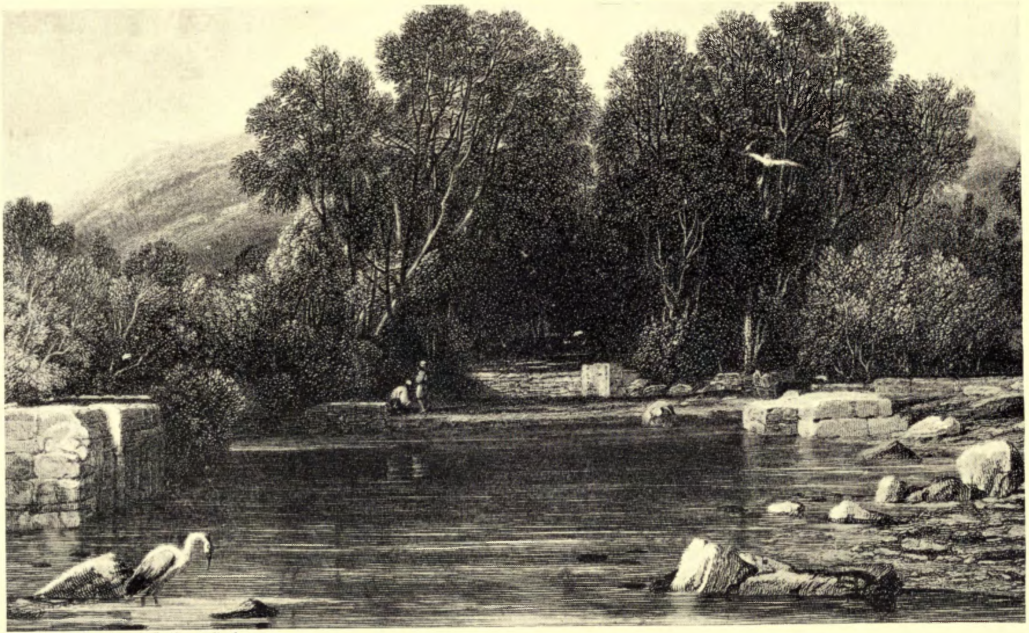
iv. 1, 2. *Suffering purifies.*

Christ's suffering on earth our example; suffering for his sake subjects our life to the will of God.

1. Forasmuch. This verse resumes the main subject of the duty and privilege of suffering for righteousness' sake introduced in iii. 14-18.

suffered. Some ancient MSS. add 'for us,' so A. V.; others 'for you.'

in the flesh: in this present life, cf. next verse; perhaps



Drawing by A. W. Callcott, R.A.

FOUNTAIN AT JERICHO (RIBHAM)

ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no 2

also suggesting that persecution only touched men's property and persons, not the inner life 'hid with Christ in God.'

arm . . . yourselves: provide yourselves with armour and weapons; i. e. let the 'mind' be your defence against the temptations involved in persecution, and enable you to resist and overcome them.

mind: rather, as R. V. marg., 'thought'; only elsewhere in the N. T. in Heb. iv. 12, where R. V. translates 'intents.'

the same thought: (*a*) may refer back to the opening words, 'the same thought, viz. that Christ suffered'; or (*b*) E. V., 'the same mind' would mean 'the same as that of Christ,' scarcely possible as a matter of Greek, which, however, might mean 'the same view,' i. e. 'arm yourselves by taking the same view of your suffering as Christ took of his'; or (*c*) the thought may be described in the following words, 'the same thought (which sustained Christ), namely, that he that hath suffered,' &c.

he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. If we adopt (*a*) or (*b*) in the previous note, and take this clause in the sense 'for he,' &c., as giving a reason for imitating Christ's willing acceptance of suffering, then it means that such acceptance involves escape from sin. A righteous life brings with it suffering, in the effort required to relinquish selfish pleasures and unjust gain, in the discharge of unattractive duties, and in the endurance of persecution. Sin arises from the refusal to submit to this suffering; so far as a man has become willing to accept suffering for righteousness' sake, he is set free from sin.

If we adopt (*c*) in the previous note, and take the clause as stating what the thought is, then it might be understood as in the previous paragraph; or it may mean that the suffering of Christ atoned for sin, and released him from the connexion with sin which he accepted for our sake [1], and may also imply that by entering into the 'fellowship of his suffering,' we realize our salvation from the guilt and bondage of sin, 'are made to cease from sin.' Cf. Rom. vi. 7, 'He that hath died is justified from sin,' which has been explained, 'A dead man has his quittance from any claim that sin can make against him,' i. e. as physical death frees a man from the claims of human law, so the death to sin involved in faith in Christ, in appropriating salvation by identifying oneself with his atoning death, frees man from the claims of sin and of the law.

The reference, however, to suffering as atonement, although

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[1] 'Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf,' 2 Cor. v. 21.

longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to
3 the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time
past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gen-

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parallel to iii. 18, seems alien to the immediate context, which is concerned with suffering for righteousness' sake, and further, in the following verses, with a righteous life as the natural sequel to such suffering. It seems better, therefore, to understand this clause as commending patient endurance on account of its moral value.

2. ye . . . should live . . . your time: R. V. marg. and A. V., 'he . . . his time.' The Greek may be translated either way, and might be rendered 'that there may no longer for the remaining time be living,' &c.

the rest of your time in the flesh: the remainder of your earthly life.

to the lusts of men, . . . to the will of God. Contending influences sought to make the readers conform to one or other of two entirely different moral standards. The example and arguments of many of their neighbours, reinforced by their own natural desires and former habits[1], proposed inclination as the true guide to conduct; let men follow their natural impulses. Christ and the Spirit proposed to guide and correct men's impulses, whether natural or not, by referring them to the Divine will, to which life must be both surrendered and conformed.

The exhortation in these verses seems to be twofold: (*a*) You have already made sacrifices for your faith; do not lose the fruit of such conduct by lapsing into sin, but rather (*b*) be willing to make further sacrifices, because through cheerful endurance lies the path to a yet higher life.

iv. 3-5. *Former sins to be abandoned.*

Let, therefore, neither old evil habits nor former bad companions seduce you from your allegiance to God. He will judge those who tempt and persecute you.

3. the time past. The A. V. adds, with inferior MSS., 'of your life,' which is a correct interpretation of the text.

may suffice. Some ancient MSS. add 'us,' so the A. V., others 'you.' Note the Apostle's irony, 'You have given quite time enough to such conduct.'

to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles: 'to have devoted yourselves to realizing such desires as the Gentiles cherish and indulge.' This verse clearly implies that the readers of the Epistle, before their conversion, lived according to the lax tiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idola-

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[1] Verses 3 and 4.

morality of the Gentiles; and, therefore, that most of them, at any rate, were Gentiles. No doubt there were some Jews who imitated the sins of the Gentiles; but the sins of the Jews, as a body, were different from those of the Gentiles, lying rather in greed and self-righteous censoriousness than in loose living. One cannot believe that, without further explanation, Paul would charge the Jewish Christians of Asia Minor, as a body, with having 'wrought the desire of the Gentiles,' &c.

lasciviousness (*aselgeia*). In the Greek this word, like those that follow, is plural, 'lascivious acts.' *Aselgeia* is perhaps rather 'lawless insolence and wanton caprice[1],' the rowdiness and horseplay associated with drunken debauchery.

lusts. In this connexion used specially of physical impurity.

winebibbings: *lit.* 'boilings over with wine'; only here in the N. T.

revellings. Only elsewhere in the N. T., Rom. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 21. The word is explained in a good sense as 'a jovial festivity with music and dancing'; in a bad sense as 'rowdy and indecent singing and drinking bouts.' The word *komos*, here translated 'revelling,' furnished Milton with the title of his masque of *Comus*.

carousings: *lit.* 'drinking-bouts'; only here in the N. T.

abominable: rather, 'contrary to law and order,' especially 'infringing the rights and dignity of a deity,' i. e. in a Christian document, 'of God.' Elsewhere in the N. T. only Acts x. 28, in Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends, where the word is translated 'unlawful,' thus: 'It is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation.' Those who hold that this Epistle was written to Jews explain this phrase 'idolatries forbidden by Jewish law': but, as has been already said, it is incredible that the Jewish Christians of Asia Minor, as a body, had once been given to idolatry. Some suppose that the term 'contrary to Divine law' is used from the Christian standpoint, idolatry being an insult to the Divine majesty. But the connexion supports the E. V. rendering, 'abominable.' Many of the heathen rites were cruel and impure, and reprobated by some of the nobler characters amongst the heathen themselves. The phrase probably refers to participation in such rites, which, apart from any question of mere idolatry, outraged the sense of common decency, and of what was seemly in Divine worship.

4. they think it strange. A single word in the Greek, a verb

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[1] Trench, *Synonyms*.

4 tries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:
5 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the
6 quick and the dead. For unto this end was the gospel

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used elsewhere in the N. T. to mean 'to be a guest'; in this sense in verse 12 and in Acts xvii. 20.

the same excess: as they themselves indulge in.

excess: R. V. marg., 'flood'; only here in the N. T., and rare elsewhere; *lit.* 'outpouring'; said to be used in the sense of 'slough,' if so here the figure is of 'running into the slough.' The R. V. text seems more probable.

riot. A cognate word is used in the parable of the Prodigal Son, in the phrase 'riotous living' (Luke xv. 13). 'Riot' is essentially 'wastefulness and riotous excess[1].'

speaking evil of you. As in ii. 12, iii. 16, iv. 14; *lit.* 'blaspheming' both Christians and Christ.

5. who: viz. the blasphemers.

ready: because the second coming of Christ as judge was regarded as imminent (see verse 7).

quick: Elizabethan for 'living.'

the quick and the dead: i. e. all generations of men; not, as some, the spiritually living—believers—and the spiritually dead—unbelievers.

iv. 6. *The preaching to the dead.*

Judgement embraces the dead, therefore was the gospel preached to them in order that, though they were once judged in the experiences of their earthly life, they may yet attain unto spiritual life.

6. This verse has been interpreted in very many different ways. The 'preaching to the dead' reminds one of the 'preaching to the spirits in prison' in iii. 19, another very disputed text. Again, the 'dead' here are no doubt the same as the 'dead' in verse 5. Some more or less improbable views may be mentioned briefly before the one adopted is given at greater length.

(*a*) The 'dead' are those dead in trespasses and sins, and the verse describes the object with which the gospel was preached to them.

(*b*) The 'dead' are Christians to whom the gospel was preached in their lifetime, who were condemned by men, but destined by God to everlasting life.

(*c*) The 'dead' are certain of the 'evil-speakers,' who have died, but will not therefore escape judgement. The gospel was preached

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[1] Trench, *Synonyms*.

preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

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to them during their lifetime with a view to their salvation, but fruitlessly.

But all such views seem to require a very strained interpretation of the various clauses in the verse, and it is better to take 'dead' in its natural sense of the dead generally, and to interpret thus—

(*d*) The 'dead' are those who died before the gospel was preached on earth, but they heard it in the abode of the dead (iii. 19).

The following is a detailed exposition of the verse according to this view.

For. It was natural that those who had heard the gospel in their lifetime, and thus had every opportunity of salvation, should be judged; and it is also right that the dead should be judged, *for* they have also heard the gospel.

the gospel preached . . . to the dead. In iii. 19 the idea of our Lord preaching to the dead was applied to a particular class, Noah's contemporaries; here it is generalized. See also on iii. 19. The vague and perhaps ambiguous character of these two passages render it impossible for us to find out exactly what Peter had in his mind. Certainly we must not credit him with believing all that is contained in the extant narratives of the Descent into Hades. In any case the dead to whom the preaching was addressed had not heard the gospel during their lifetime. The word for 'preaching' is different in the two verses.

that they might be judged. This clause is a little difficult to explain according to the interpretation followed here. The sense, however, requires us to take it as equivalent to 'although or after they had been judged,' &c.; and according to some distinguished scholars, at any rate, this is a possible meaning of the Greek.

according to men: after the manner of men's experience, as it must happen to men, as men, to be judged.

in the flesh: probably refers specially to death, thought of as the universal consequence of human sin, in accordance with Gen. ii. 17. In principle the reference would include the material suffering which follows sin in the present life, and the clause might be paraphrased, 'Though in their earthly life and death they endured the suffering which is the common doom of sinful men.'

that they might . . . live. The object of the preaching was the salvation of those addressed.

according to God in the spirit. The contrast here is

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore
8 of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things
being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love

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parallel to that in iii. 18, where it is said of Christ that he was 'put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit.' As the 'dead' shared the lot of men in death, so, if they accepted the gospel preached to them, they would share the eternal life of God, with its supernatural (in the spirit) characteristics.

iv. 7–11. *Recapitulation.*

Recapitulation of the chief points of previous exhortations, enforced by the consideration of the imminence of the second coming.

7. the end of all things: i. e. the second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the judgement.

is at hand. See on Jas. v. 7, 8.

therefore. The thought that the judgement is near, and the time short for serving God and man in the present life, is to stimulate devotion towards God, and love and helpfulness towards men. So in the parable of the Wise Steward, Christ says, 'Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing,' i. e. giving the household 'their portion of food in due season' (Luke xii. 42, 45). Contrast the conduct of the Jews of Isaiah's time, when they expected the judgement of Jehovah in the capture of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, and said, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die' (Isa. xxii. 13). Similarly, Paul (1 Cor. xv. 32) quotes the same saying as a natural utterance for men who did not expect any resurrection.

be . . . of sound mind: sometimes to be sane, as opposed to insane; more commonly, as here, in a more general sense, to be discreet, temperate, and reasonable, to exercise self-control.

be sober unto prayer. See on i. 13. To 'be of sound mind' puts the idea positively, to 'be sober' negatively. The idea that the Second Coming would naturally lead men, as it did some of the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 9—v. 11, 2 Thess. ii. 1—iii. 15), and has done many others since, into restless excitement, grotesque folly, and even into immorality. The qualities Peter emphasizes would enable them to avoid such errors.

unto prayer: *lit.* 'prayers.' Irrational and restless excitement makes true prayer impossible.

8. fervent. See on i. 22.

love among yourselves. Cf. i. 22, ii. 1, 17, iii. 8. In this verse, as in many other places, the A. V. has 'charity' for 'love'; 'charity' having the sense of the Latin *caritas,* used in the Latin translation of the Bible for 'Christian love,' from which it is derived. But as the A. V. 'charity' is constantly taken to

covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to 9
another without murmuring: according as each hath 10

mean 'almsgiving,' or 'an indulgent attitude towards one's neighbour's shortcomings,' it is well that the R. V. has returned to the older English translation 'love[1],' used by Tindale and Coverdale.

love covereth a multitude of sins. A free quotation of Prov. x. 12, 'Love covereth all transgressions[2]' (cf. Jas. v. 20). The preceding clause in Proverbs is 'hatred stirreth up strifes,' which shews that 'covering . . . sins' means forgiving the sins of others. The verse in Proverbs might be paraphrased, 'Hatred seeks an occasion of quarrel, and sets people against one another by ill-natured and slanderous tale-bearing; love is willing to overlook offences against itself, and does not try to make bad blood between others.' If this is the meaning here it is parallel to ii. 1. But our clause may have been current as a popular proverb without the preceding words, and Peter may have used it without any recollection of its context in the O. T. Even then, however, the meaning given above is the most probable, though some prefer, 'Love covers the sins of him who loves'; and the parallel passage in James suggests that 'love covers sins by converting the sinner.'

9. hospitality: also commended in Rom. xii. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Titus i. 8; Heb. xiii. 2.

without murmuring. There were many claims upon the hospitality of the early Christians, on the part of itinerant preachers, refugees from persecution, and others. These claims would often be burdensome to a small and poor community. Moreover, there soon arose a class who habitually sponged on the liberality of the churches (see on 2 Pet. ii. 3; Jude 4, 12). A. V., 'without grudging.'

10, 11. These verses are similar in form and substance to Rom. xii. 6, 7; for details see following notes.

10. according as each hath received a gift. Cf. Rom. xii. 6, 'having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us.' 'Gift' (*charisma*) only occurs elsewhere in the N. T. in the Pauline Epistles, chiefly in Romans and 1 Corinthians. It is used here, as often by Paul, as a technical term for any faculty of Christian service bestowed by God on the believer, e. g. as in 1 Cor. xii. 8–10 (see also the whole chapter and vii. 7), 'the word of wisdom . . . the word of knowledge . . . faith . . . gifts of healings . . . workings of miracles . . . prophecy . . . discernings of spirits . . . divers kinds of tongues . . . the interpretation of tongues.'

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[1] For the Greek ἀγάπη.

[2] Following the Hebrew, from which the LXX varies considerably.

received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good
11 stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, *speaking* as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, *ministering* as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial

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ministering it among yourselves: each using his special gift for the benefit of all the rest.

stewards. A favourite idea of Paul, e.g. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 'Let a man so account of us, as of *ministers*' (cf. above) 'of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God'; Eph. iii. 2, 'If . . . ye have heard of the stewardship of that grace of God which was given me'; and Titus i. 7, 'The overseer . . . must be blameless as God's steward.'

manifold[1]. Cf. Jas. i. 2. In Eph. iii. 10 the 'wisdom of God' is styled 'muchly-manifold[2].' The reference is to that variety of gifts which is illustrated by Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii.

11. speaketh: exercises the gifts of prophecy (preaching), teaching, speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues, &c.

speaking **as it were oracles of God:** only speaking under a clear consciousness of Divine inspiration, an injunction which would lead to much profitable silence. 1 Cor. xiv. 26-33 shews that the eagerness of early Christians to talk led to much dissension and disorder.

ministereth: exercises the gifts of healing, relief of the poor, tending the sick, &c.

whose is . . . Amen. This ascription of praise refers to Christ, not to God (cf. i. 21, v. 10, and similar doxologies in Heb. xiii. 21; Rev. i. 5, 6). The doxology, like that in v. 10, 11, concludes one of the main divisions of the Epistle.

iv. 12—v. 11. Exhortation to Christian constancy, with special applications to different classes of readers.

iv. 12-14. *The duty of patient endurance.*

The Apostle yet once more exhorts to patience under persecution, according to the example of Christ and in the assurance of future bliss.

12. Beloved: introducing a main division of the Epistle, as in ii. 11.

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[1] *ποικίλος.* [2] *πολυποίκιλος.*

among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as
though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch 13
as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at
the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with
exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of 14
Christ, blessed *are ye*; because the *Spirit* of glory and

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think it not strange. Cf. on iv. 4. Since, as Christians, they were special objects of God's love and care, they might naturally 'think it strange' that they were singled out for exceptional suffering.

the fiery trial among you . . . to prove you. Cf. i. 6, 7, 'the proof of your faith . . . proved by fire.' The words 'trial' and 'prove' suggest one explanation of the apparent strangeness; affliction was a discipline which tested, confirmed, and developed Christian character.

13. partakers of Christ's sufferings. The burden of the mystery of suffering is lightened when we remember that it was shared by the well-beloved Son of God. Cf. i. 11, ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 1, and Phil. iii. 10, 'That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings'; 2 Cor. i. 7, 'Ye are partakers of the sufferings' (of Christ); and Col. i. 24, 'I . . . fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ.' The sufferings of the persecuted Christians were part of the sufferings of Christ, because their endurance was inspired by his Spirit; they suffered for righteousness' sake, and their constancy tended to the salvation of men and the glory of God.

the revelation of his glory. Cf. i. 5, 7, 13.

rejoice. Cf. i. 8.

14. reproached for the name of Christ: i. e. because they were called Christians, and so bore the name of Christ (cf. verse 16). These verses imply that Christianity itself might be a crime in the eyes of the general public, if not in that of the law. Hence they have been cited as proof that the Epistle was not written till A. D. 80 or later, because before that time, at any rate, the law of the empire did not regard Christianity in itself as a crime (cf. Introduction, pp. 41 ff.). This verse may be a reminiscence of our Lord's saying (Matt. v. 11), 'Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you . . . for my sake.' Cf. iii. 14.

the Spirit **of glory and the Spirit of God:** more exactly, 'that Spirit which is at once the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God.' Some ancient MSS. add 'and of power' after 'glory.' Only here is the Spirit styled the Spirit of glory; in the O. T. 'glory' sometimes means 'God made manifest.' The presence of the Spirit was an assurance that the manifestation of God's glory

15 the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you
suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as
16 a meddler in other men's matters: but if *a man suffer* as
a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify
17 God in this name. For the time *is come* for judgement

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through His Spirit, i. e. the Second Coming, would actually take place, and that the Christians would have their share in it.

resteth upon you: in contrast to men's reproaches. Cf. Isa. xi. 2, 'The spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him.' After 'upon you' the A. V. adds, with inferior MSS., 'on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.'

iv. 15, 16. *The blessedness of suffering for Christ.*

Let no one bring dishonour on Christ by suffering just punishment for crimes actually committed by him; but let him glory in punishment inflicted because he is a Christian.

15. none of you. Emphatic in the Greek, 'no single one of you.'

a meddler in other men's matters. In the Greek, 'another-folks'-overseer[1],' a masterful busybody; a single word, found nowhere else in Greek literature except in later passages, where it is probably borrowed from this verse; it may have been invented by Peter. 1 Tim. v. 13 bids the women not be 'busybodies[2].' Meddling—whether from undue zeal to conform the customs of non-Christians to the Christian standard, as some explain the passages, or from love of power or 'managing'—is not a sufficiently serious crime to be grouped with murder. Possibly this rare word is the equivalent of the technical term for some class of criminal, but we cannot say what class. Note, however, that the repetition of 'as' somewhat separates this word from the preceding.

16. Christian. Only elsewhere in the N. T., Acts xi. 26, xxvi. 28. Obviously, if the ostensible charge was of some crime, but the real cause of offence the profession of Christianity, the Christian might equally glory. Cf. verse 14.

glorify God in this name: accept and glory in the name Christian, and at the same time praise God for the grace by which came faith and salvation.

iv. 17-19. *Be steadfast.*

Persevere in holy living and in confident trust in God, for the judgement is at hand, alike for believers and unbelievers.

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[1] *ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος.* [2] *περίεργοι.*

to begin at the house of God: and if *it begin* first at us, what *shall be* the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where 18 shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Wherefore let them 19 also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am 5

The righteous may well tremble at the thought—but what of the ungodly?

17. the time is come **for judgement to begin at the house of God.** The sufferings of the persecuted Christians were a beginning of the judgement (not merely 'judgement'); they were a trial which sifted faithful from unfaithful. As yet the heathen were not called to account.

the end of them that obey not: the doom not only of the persecutors and other heathen, but also of professing Christians who were disloyal to Christ.

In Ezek. ix. 6 judgement begins at the house of God, and in Jer. xxv. 29 at the city of God.

18. A quotation of Prov. xi. 31 from the LXX, which differs considerably from the Hebrew.

ungodly[1]**:** the opposite of 'godly' (cf. on 'godliness' in 2 Pet. i. 3).

19. A summary of the main ideas of the Epistle, persecution an instrument of Divine discipline, they 'suffer according to the will of God'; the necessity of faith, that they may 'commit their souls to Him'; the duty of consistency, 'in well-doing'; and the certainty that their faith will be justified, because it is reposed in 'a faithful Creator.'

their souls: their spiritual interests, now and hereafter (cf. i. 9).

unto a faithful Creator. The A. V., following inferior MSS., prefixes 'as' to this clause. Since God created the soul at its first beginning, and also bestowed upon it the new life which is in Christ, the Christian may well trust to God to be 'faithful' to the interests of His redeemed creature and to His own promises.

v. 1–5. *Elders.*

Let the elders be disinterested and conciliatory in their govern-

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[1] ἀσεβής, &c., four times in Romans, three in Timothy and Titus, once in 1 Peter, three times in 2 Peter, six times in Jude.

a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed :
2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according

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ment of the church; let the younger submit to them; and let all shew mutual deference.

1. the elders. Verse 2 (which see) speaks of them as 'acting as overseers[1],' and implies that they were church officials; verse 5 contrasts them with the 'younger,' and thus implies that they were the 'older.' The government of a local church in N. T. times lay in the hands of a committee called almost indifferently 'elders' or 'overseers.' Peter seems to take for granted that the official 'elders' would be the older members of the community. This simple and loosely defined organization points to an early date for the Epistle.

fellow-elder: in years, and in the cares and burdens of authority; the latter either because he counted his apostleship as a kind of eldership, or because he acted as one of the elders of the church where he lived.

fellow-elder . . . witness . . . partaker. Peter commends his message to their sympathy by associating himself with them, to their obedience by suggesting his authority as an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ (cf. Acts i. 21, 22).

witness. The Greek connects this very closely with fellow-elder, 'One who is at the same time fellow-elder and witness.' Hence it has been understood as 'fellow-witness,' i. e. both Peter and the elders bore witness by their preaching to the sufferings of Christ. Even if this is the meaning, the word must have reminded both the Apostle and his readers that he was an eye-witness, and they, as a class at any rate, were not.

partaker of the glory. Cf. iv. 13.

2. Tend. Cf. ii. 25; *Ps. Sol.* xvii. 45, 'Tend the Lord's flock[2].'

among you: rather, 'with you,' i. e. 'the flock so far as you have to do with it,' the particular Christian society committed to your care.

exercising the oversight. Omitted by some ancient MSS.; the words may have been inserted to explain the figure in the previous clause.

not of constraint: not merely because of the obligations of their official position.

according unto God: in Divine fashion, following the example

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[1] ἐπίσκοπος, the original of our 'bishop,' in which sense ἐπίσκοπος came to be used later on.

[2] Hühn, *A. T. Cit.*

unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;
neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but 3
making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when 4
the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive
the crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye 5
younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird
yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God
resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

of Christ (cf. ii. 25). The phrase, however, is omitted by some ancient MSS.

for filthy lucre. A single word, an adverb, in the Greek, 'from dishonourable greed of gain[1]'; similarly, 1 Tim. iii. 8 lays down that the deacon, and Titus i. 7 that the 'overseer[2],' must not be 'greedy of filthy lucre[3].' 'Lucre' (=gain) is the Latin *lucrum* of the Vulgate written as an English word through the influence of the French *lucre.* Our versions here follow Tindale. Cf. Heb. xiii. 5.

of a ready mind: with spontaneous zeal.

3. the charge allotted to you: *lit.* 'the lots,' i. e. allotted portions. A less probable view of the clause is the A. V., 'God's heritage.' Cf. 2 Cor. i. 24; Heb. xiii. 7.

4. chief Shepherd: Christ (cf. ii. 25; Heb. xiii. 20).

manifested. Cf. iv. 13.

crown: a wreath of flowers or foliage, worn by victors in games, and by honoured guests.

that fadeth not away: in contrast to the earthly wreaths which *did* fade (cf. i. 4).

5. Likewise, ye younger. Cf. iii. 1, 7, v. 2.

Yea, all of you. So the R. V. text, treating these words as the beginning of a new sentence. The R. V. marg., by an alteration in the punctuation of the Greek, and the omission, with the best MSS., of 'to serve,' obtains the rendering, 'Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder; yea, all of you to one another. Gird yourselves,' &c. The A. V. obtains the same sense, somewhat differently, 'Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed,' &c.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. A quotation (Prov. iii. 34) from the LXX, which differs slightly from

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[1] *αἰσχροκερδῶς*, only here in the N. T.

[2] R. V. text, 'bishop.'

[3] *αἰσχροκερδής*, only in these two passages in the N. T.; in 1 Tim. iii. 8 'not greedy of filthy lucre' is not found in the oldest MSS.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of
7 God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all
8 your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. Be
sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring
lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
9 whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the
same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who

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the Hebrew, quoted in the same words in Jas. iv. 6. Cf. Prov. xxix. 23; Isa. lvii. 15, lxvi. 2.

v. 6-11. *Concluding exhortation.*

The duty of submissive trust in God, and of watchfulness and constancy. God will uphold them, and bring them into His glory. Short doxology.

6. in due time: i. e. at 'the revelation of Jesus Christ' (i. 7, iv. 13). An ancient MS. reads 'in the time of visitation.'

7. anxiety. A less ambiguous word than the A. V. 'care'; moreover, the Greek words for 'anxiety' and 'careth' are entirely different. The verse is a reminiscence of Ps. lv. 22, 'Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and he shall sustain thee,' with the LXX of which it presents points of verbal agreement.

8. Be sober. Cf. i. 13, iv. 7.

be watchful. A frequent exhortation, e. g. 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Rev. iii. 2. It is the word twice used by our Lord in his remonstrance to the Apostle in Gethsemane: 'Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not *watch* one hour? *Watch* and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' Mark xiv. 37 f.

your adversary the devil. 'Adversary' is strictly an opponent in a lawsuit, and is so used in the only other passages in which the word occurs in the N. T. (Matt. v. 25; Luke xii. 58, xviii. 3); this is also sometimes the meaning of the Hebrew *Satan*, e. g. Ps. cix. 6, which became a proper name for the devil. Thus in Zech. iii, Satan appears as the prosecutor, so to speak, in a charge against the High Priest. In Rev. xii. 10, Satan is called 'the accuser of the brethren.' Any lapse on the part of the Christians would enable Satan to convict them of sin and secure their punishment. It is suggested that there is a hint that the 'adversaries' who prosecuted the Christians in the law-courts were inspired by the devil.

seeking whom he may devour. Cf. Luke xxii. 31, addressed to Peter.

9. stedfast in your faith: R. V. marg., 'the faith,' firm in their loyalty to Christ.

the same sufferings . . . in your brethren (*lit.* 'brother-

are in the world. And the God of all grace, who called 10
you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have
suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, stablish,
strengthen you. To him *be* the dominion for ever and 11
ever. Amen.

By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account *him*, I 12
have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that

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hood') **who are in the world.** This clause apparently means that the readers of the Epistle shared their troubles with the whole Christian brotherhood; therefore their trial was not 'strange,' no mark of Divine displeasure or neglect; and they should imitate the constancy so abundantly displayed by other Christians.

10, 11. Cf. 1 Thess. v. 23–28; 2 Thess. iii. 16–18; Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

The A. V., following for the most part inferior MSS., adds 'Jesus' after 'Christ,' 'settle' after 'strengthen,' 'glory and' before 'dominion.' For 'Christ Jesus' see on 'Jesus Christ' (Jas. i. 1).

v. 12–14. *Closing salutations.*

12. Silvanus: a name often contracted into Silas. This Silvanus is commonly identified with the Silas who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts xv. 40—xviii. 5, 22), the first portion of which was devoted to Asia Minor. Silas is styled Silvanus in 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. If the identification is correct, the mention of Silvanus and Marcus helps to explain the Pauline character of the Epistle. Although Silas was a common name—borne, for instance, by four persons mentioned by Josephus—the identification is probable, for the Silas of Acts was an important member of the church of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 22); he was therefore well known to Peter before he joined Paul, and after leaving the latter he may very well have returned to Jerusalem and again have become associated with Peter.

I have written: i.e. the present letter; better, 'I am writing.' Silvanus was the bearer of the letter, who is commended to the churches by this paragraph. Some, however, suppose that he was the Apostle's amanuensis (cf. Rom. xvi. 22), or even that this paragraph is an avowal that Silvanus was the real author of the Epistle, and that the ascription to Peter was a mere literary form, or that the Apostle only endorsed and accepted it. Some very slight support for this view may be derived from the 'as I account him,' which might be due to the modesty of Silvanus in speaking of himself. The whole phrase, however, may very well

13 this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein. She that is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, saluteth you;
14 and *so doth* Mark my son. Salute one another with a kiss of love.

Peace be unto you all that are in Christ.

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mean 'whom I hold to be,' &c. The Greek word[1] does not imply the uncertainty suggested by the A.V. 'I suppose.' Cf. Introduction, pp. 43 f.

this is the true grace of God. The grace which they had experienced in conversion, and in the blessedness and progress of Christian life, was no delusion, as they were tempted to suppose by their troubles, but the genuine grace of God.

13. She that is in Babylon, elect together with you. As this salutation is coupled with that of Marcus, we might suppose an individual to be meant; but it is difficult to believe that any woman—even Peter's wife, as some suppose—would send her greeting to the churches of Asia Minor in this mysterious way. Hence the clause probably refers to a church. Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 John 1, 13.

Babylon. Probably Rome (see Introduction, p. 44).

Mark my son. Usually identified with the 'John Mark' who was the companion of Paul at the beginning of the first journey, but deserted the Apostle, was refused permission to join him for the second journey, and went on a separate tour with Barnabas (Acts xii. 25, xiii. 5, xv. 37). Afterwards he was reconciled to Paul (Col. iv. 10). Mark was a Jerusalem Jew, connected with leading members of the church (Acts xii. 12), so that we may apply to him what was said above of Silvanus. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10).

a kiss of love: a token of Christian brotherhood (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26). Later on the 'kiss of peace' became a regular ceremony of public worship. After a while it was restricted to men kissing men, and women women. This rite disappeared in the West in the thirteenth century, but is still observed in some Eastern churches.

14. Christ. A.V. adds 'Jesus, Amen,' with insufficient authority. See on v. 10 and Jas. i. 1.

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[1] *λογίζομαι.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER

SIMON Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to 1
them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in

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i. 1, 2. *Salutation.*

The Apostle Peter greets his fellow Christians, and prays that the Divine blessings they enjoy may be multiplied through their increasing knowledge of Divine truth.

On the general form of the salutation see on 1 Pet. i. 1.

Simon: so the Vatican MS., most of the other MSS. have **Symeon,** a form of the Apostle's name only found elsewhere in Acts xv. 14, James's speech at the Council of Jerusalem. Symeon is probably correct. It is the more accurate reproduction of the Hebrew name, and perhaps suggests the sympathy of the author with the Jewish churches. Simeon, like Jude, was originally the name of one of the twelve tribes, and in the O. T. is only so used. It is derived, in Gen. xxix. 33, from *shama* (heard); and this derivation may have influenced parents to give this name to sons in whom they saw the token that God had *heard* their prayers. The name, usually in its Greek form 'Simon,' was very common in N. T. times; it is the name of several persons mentioned in the Gospels, Acts, and Josephus.

Simon Peter: so Matt. xvi. 16; Luke v. 8; John i. 41; and *passim*; never in Mark or Acts. This form of the name is an abbreviation of 'Simon, called,' or 'surnamed Peter' (Matt. x. 2; Acts x. 5). 'Simeon Peter' only occurs here; in 1. Pet. i. 1 we have simply 'Peter.'

a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. This double designation only occurs elsewhere in Rom. i. 1, 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle'; and Titus i. 1, 'Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ.' For 'servant' see on Jas. i. 1, for 'apostle' on 1. Pet. i. 1.

obtained: *lit.* 'obtained by lot,' 'were alloted,' used in John the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ:

xix. 24 of casting lots for the garments of Jesus. The word implies receiving through Divine favour apart from any merit or effort of the recipient.

a like precious faith with us. 'Faith,' here and in verse 5, man's response to God's call; as in Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.' Some explain it, as in Jude 3, of the truths believed; see also Jas. i. 3. 'A like precious,' in Greek a single word, *isotimon* (R. V. marg., *lit.* 'equally precious'), only found in the N. T.; 'precious' in the esteem of those who possessed it, and in the privileges and blessings it conferred. 'Us' is variously explained as meaning the Apostle himself; or the apostles generally, compared with those addressed; or Jewish Christians, compared with the readers, who would then be Gentiles; or even Christians generally, in relation to the particular church addressed. In any case, the phrase implies that the writer and his readers are on the same plane of spiritual earnestness and experience; a touch of tactful courtesy quite in the manner of Paul; cf. too the 'fellow-elder' of 1 Pet. v. 1, and Peter's speech (Acts xi. 17), 'God gave unto them [Cornelius and his household, Gentiles] the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.'

in the righteousness of: i. e. which we all obtained through that Divine righteousness which is no respecter of persons.

our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. According to this translation (R. V. text) one Person, Jesus Christ, is referred to, and is described as 'God and Saviour.' This view of the words is supported by the parallel phrase, 'our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' i. 11, ii. 20, iii. 18. Christ is spoken of as God in Acts xx. 28, 'the church of God[1], which he purchased with his own blood'; Rom. ix. 5, 'Christ . . . who is over all, God blessed for ever[2]'; Heb. i. 8, 'But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God'; and was addressed by Thomas (John xx. 28), 'My Lord and my God.' Compare, too, the reference in the next verse to Christ's '*Divine* power.' Nevertheless, the use of God as a descriptive epithet of Christ is very striking, and has no certain parallel in the N. T. (on Titus ii. 13 see below); but in Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, xviii. 2, we read, 'Mary was pregnant with our God, Jesus, the Christ.'

The Sinaitic MS. and some versions have 'Lord' instead of 'God,' probably a correction, intended to remove the difficulty, and suggested by the formula in i. 11, &c.

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[1] Perhaps, however, 'the Lord' should be read.

[2] The rendering, however, of this passage is quite uncertain.

Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge 2
of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine 3

It is possible, however, to translate, as in R. V. marg., 'our God, and the Saviour,' a rendering supported by the general usage of the N. T., by the separate references to God and Jesus in verse 2, and by the fact that in the parallel formula in Titus i. 4 'God the Father' is distinguished from 'Christ Jesus our Saviour.'

Titus ii. 13 is an exact parallel; there, too, it is uncertain whether the translation should be, as in R. V. text, 'our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ' or, as in R. V. marg., 'of the great God and our Saviour.'

Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is spoken of as 'Saviour' in Luke ii. 11; John iv. 42; Acts v. 31, xiii. 23; Eph. v. 23; Phil. iii. 20; 1 John iv. 14; but the phrase 'our Saviour Jesus Christ' is characteristic of 2 Timothy (i. 10); Titus (i. 4, ii. 13, iii. 6), and 2 Peter (i. 1, 11, ii. 20, iii. 2, 18).

2. The parallel formula in 1 Pet. i. 2 is simply 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied'; Jude 2 has 'Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.'

knowledge of God. The Greek word, *epignōsis*, means advanced knowledge, yet fuller than that which they already had; grace and peace were to be multiplied through progress in knowledge. The word occurs fifteen times in the Pauline Epistles, once in Hebrews, and four times in this Epistle; nowhere else in the N. T. In the second century there was much controversy between the church and heretical schools as to the true *gnōsis* or knowledge of Divine truth. *Epignōsis* would be the highest, most certain truth; something more than *gnōsis*.

The 'knowledge of God,' &c., probably includes knowledge about God, &c., and knowledge given by God, &c.

i. 3-11. *Be steadfast and consistent.*

In Christ, by the revelation made through him and concerning him, and the promises which he makes and guarantees, God offers us all that is necessary for the highest life; that you may escape from corruption and become partakers of the Divine nature. Since then God has done His part, see that you do yours; seek diligently all Christian graces. So shall you render intelligent service to your Master, and not drift blindly back to your old evil life. Therefore seek such graces diligently as the seal of your Christian calling, for those who thus seek are kept from stumbling, and are assured of a glorious entrance into Christ's eternal kingdom.

3. seeing that. The R. V. puts a semicolon after verse 2, and a full stop after verse 4, thus making verses 3 and 4 the reason for the prayer in verse 2; but this is contrary to the

power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that
4 called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he

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analogy of the other Epistles and does not give a good sense. It seems better, therefore, to place a full stop after verse 2, and a comma after verse 4, thus making verses 3 and 4 the ground of the exhortation in verses 5-7.

his: Christ's.

divine power. A rare phrase; it occurs, with other parallels to verses 3-11, in a Carian inscription, about A. D. 22, in honour of Zeus and Hecate. Our author either used the inscription as he did Jude, or borrowed from the Pagan liturgical language of Asia Minor. (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, pp. 360 ff.)

life: the life of the soul, here and hereafter.

godliness. This word and its cognates, 'godly,' 'to be godly,' only occur in the N. T. in Acts (five times), the Pastoral Epistles (thirteen times), and this Epistle (five times). The Greek word, *eusebeia*, which is often found in pagan inscriptions, means due reverence towards God, expressing itself in worship and in a devout and obedient life. In classical Greek it is also used for filial piety. In the LXX it translates 'fear' (of God), and is coupled, as here, with 'knowledge,' Prov. i. 7; Isa. xi. 2, xxxiii. 6.

knowledge of. See verse 2.

him that called us. 'Him' and the following 'his,' and, in verse 4, 'he' and 'his' refer to the same Person, either the Father or Christ; it is not clear which. A similar ambiguity is found in many passages, probably because the writers closely identified the Son and the Father, and they did not feel it necessary to indicate clearly which was intended.

by his own glory and virtue: so Sinaitic MS., &c., certainly the correct reading; the Vatican MS., &c., have 'Through glory,' &c., by an obvious mistake. The A.V. 'to glory,' &c., is anincorrect rendering of the latter reading. 'Virtue' (*arete*) is only attributed to God or Christ here and in the somewhat parallel passage (1 Pet. ii. 9), 'That ye may shew forth the virtues (E. V. excellencies) of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' The only other places where the words occurs in the N. T. are Phil. iv. 8 and 2 Pet. i. 5. *Arete* was the 'common heathen term for moral excellence,' but in the LXX it is used to translate words meaning 'glory' and 'praiseworthiness'; and thus becomes a synonym of *doxa* (glory). Probably (but cf. verse 5) it is so used here, and the phrase 'glory and virtue' is a kind of compound expression for 'glorious excellency.' Deissmann, p. 95 f., takes 'virtue' as 'manifestation of power' almost = 'miracle.'

hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption
that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause 5
adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply

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4. whereby: through the 'glory and virtue.' The manifestation of the Divine nature is an appeal to man because it is a promise of grace and blessing to those who trust themselves to God.

granted unto us . . . that . . . ye may become. The 'us' has been variously explained, as in verse 1; but the change of person is quite simply and satisfactorily explained by the transition from general reflection to direct exhortation.

through these: the promises which win us to the new life in Christ, and are realized in that life, here and hereafter.

the (marg. 'a') **divine nature:** parallel to 'his divine power' in the previous verse, which see. The writer is not thinking of any metaphysical change in human nature, but of the practical participation in the life of Christ, through his indwelling spirit, more especially of participation in God's holiness as opposed to the 'corruption of the world.'

corruption (*phthora*): five times in Paul's Epistles, four times in 2 Peter, nowhere else in the N. T. The root idea of decomposition suggests the loathsomeness and the wasting away of decaying organisms. In the N. T. 'corruption' carries with it both a literal and a figurative sense, and contrasts with the purity and permanence of Divine life. When we are won for God we are delivered from the influences which tend to corruption.

lust (*epithumia*). See on Jas. i. 14.

5. for this very cause: since God has done all that is necessary on His part for your salvation, and what still remains is in your power, and depends entirely on yourselves.

in your faith. 'In': each quality is a kind of soil or atmosphere in which its successor is nourished; 'faith' is the starting-point of all. 'Your faith': this they already possessed. The Epistle is addressed to 'them that have obtained . . . faith' (verse 1) 'Faith' here is certainly the attitude of the soul towards Christ.

supply (*epichorēgein*): a word used twice in this Epistle, and, together with the corresponding noun, five times in the Pauline Epistles. It contrasts with the 'grant' (*dorein*) of verses 3 and 4. God bestows free gifts; we have to acquire, to supply ourselves with the means of utilizing these gifts at the expense of toil and sacrifice.

6 virtue; and in *your* virtue knowledge; and in *your*
knowledge temperance; and in *your* temperance patience;
7 and in *your* patience godliness; and in *your* godliness
love of the brethren; and in *your* love of the brethren

virtue (*arete*) may here have its ordinary classical meaning of moral excellence, possibly coloured with its LXX meaning of 'praiseworthiness.' It is the idea of Jas. ii. 26, 'Faith apart from works is dead.' Faith's true sequel is the active zeal which wins approval from God and justifies faith before men.

The 'yours' supplied by the R. V. in italics in this and the following verses are better omitted. The original distinguishes between 'your faith' actually possessed and 'virtue,' &c., which doubtless they had in some measure, but yet needed to supply themselves with more completely. The latter is the point emphasized.

knowledge: the simple word *gnōsis*; the word for complete knowledge, *epignōsis*, is always used in this Epistle of the knowledge given by God or Christ. Yet Revelation did not render human learning unnecessary. The Epistle exhorts its readers to supply themselves with knowledge through the effort of learning. Probably 'knowledge' here chiefly refers to practical matters.

6. temperance (*enkrateia*): *lit.* 'the power of holding oneself in'; i. e. self-control.

patience (*hupomone*): rather, 'endurance.' 'Self-control' curbs the evil impulses of a man's own nature; 'endurance' enables him to resist the pressure of external circumstances. For 'godliness' see verse 3.

7. love of the brethren. This virtue is also emphasized in 1 Pet. i. 22, iii. 8.

In this list of the fruits of faith we have first the active gifts, virtue and knowledge; then the passive qualities of self-control and endurance; then the attitude towards God, godliness, towards the church, love of the brethren, and finally towards God and all mankind, love.

8. The condition of progress in religious knowledge, of receiving new light from God, is the strenuous exercise of all the graces both in the inner life and in relation to God and man. So John vii. 17, 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself;' and Col. i. 10, 'Bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge (*epignōsis*) of God.' The writer of our Epistle is specially anxious that his readers should have a right understanding of Christian truth, and for the time being chiefly thinks of the various Christian virtues as ministering to this end.

love. For if these things are yours and abound, they 8
make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge
of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these 9
things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten
the cleansing from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren, 10
give the more diligence to make your calling and election
sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:
for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance 11

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9. these things: the Christian graces and the consequent right understanding of Divine things.

seeing only what is near. The Greek word[1] (only here in the N. T.) should mean, according to the usage in classical Greek, 'shortsighted.' If so translated it must qualify 'blind,' i. e. so far blind as to be shortsighted. According to the literal derivation, it might mean 'closing the eyes' (so R. V. marg.), i. e. blind through one's own deliberate act.

having forgotten. The exercise of the Christian virtues leads to further enlightenment; but the neglect of them makes men blind to Divine truth, and blots out all recollection of spiritual experience.

the cleansing from his old sins: i. e. the pardon and purification with which his Christian life began.

10. Wherefore: in view of what is gained by diligence and lost by neglect.

to make your calling and election sure. According to Matt. xxii. 14, 'Many are called, but few elected (chosen)'; but probably here the two terms are used synonymously, and are combined in an emphatic compound phrase. The Divine election is only realized through man's persistent practical response to God's call to service as well as fellowship. The writer has not in view the abstract doctrine of election, but the practical working of man's relation to God in the Christian dispensation.

these things: as in verse 9.

ye shall never stumble. The consistent effort to develop the virtues enumerated in verses 5-7 would involve a life free from faults and failings.

11. supplied: as in verse 5. If we seek at all costs to equip ourselves with the Christian virtues, God will spare no expense, so to speak, to perfect our lives and crown them with blessing. There is perhaps a reference to the classical sense of the word, 'to pay the expenses of a chorus at the public games.'

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[1] μυωπάζειν.

into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and
13 are established in the truth which is with *you*. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir
14 you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as
15 our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will

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the entrance into the eternal kingdom. Cf. Dan. iv. 3. The 'kingdom' was the new dispensation, here still regarded as future. It is a spiritual state, into which there may be, in a measure, an entrance in this life, although the full realization will be hereafter. The writer of the Epistle probably was not certain whether the kingdom would come in this world or the next.

i. 12-15. *Reminiscences.*

Peter's anxiety to confirm his readers in their knowledge of the facts and principles of Christianity.

12. Wherefore: as in verse 10, with further reference to the 'entrance' in verse 11.

these things: the truths stated in verses 3-11.

though ye know them. Unless they constantly called to mind, or were reminded of the truths they knew and took for granted, these truths would have no practical effect on their lives.

the truth: the Christian faith.

13. tabernacle (*skēnōma*): 'tent,' the body. So 2 Cor. v. 1, 'The earthly house of our tabernacle' (*skēnos*); and John i. 14, 'The Word . . . tabernacled (*eskēnōsen*) among us.' The word suggests the frailty and transience of the body.

stir you up[1]: an emphatic word, 'rouse you thoroughly.'

14. swiftly: sometimes taken to mean 'soon,' and to imply that Peter is thought of as writing in his old age; but it probably means 'suddenly,' without warning. Peter did not know when he might die, therefore it was 'right,' verse 13, for him to use every possible opportunity of exhorting the brethren; hence he was justified in writing this letter.

our Lord Jesus Christ signified: i.e. in John xxi. 18, 19, 'When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

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[1] *διεγείρειν.*

give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord

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Now this he spake signifying[1] by what manner of death he should glorify God.' A martyr's death would come suddenly, whereas an old man would look forward to dying soon.

15. at every time. The reference is to the present letter, which they could keep by them and refer to at any time.

decease (*exodos*): the word used in the account of the Transfiguration, Luke ix. 30, 31, 'Moses and Elijah . . . spake of his decease.'

i. 16–18. *The Transfiguration.*

The apostles' authority as eye-witnesses of the Transfiguration.

16. we: not editorial, meaning merely Peter, but including the other apostles, especially John, who was also present at the Transfiguration; James, the third witness of that event, died long before the gospel was preached in Asia Minor, p. 68.

cunningly devised fables. The Pastoral Epistles warn their readers against 'fables' (*muthoi*, 'myths'); 1 Tim. i. 4, iv. 7, 'profane and old wives' fables'; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Titus i. 14, 'Jewish fables.' The opposition, so to speak, had tried to turn the tables upon the legitimate authorities of the church, and alleged that their teaching had no better foundation than 'fables,' and that these 'fables' were not the innocent growth of popular imagination, but had been 'cunningly devised,' i. e. deliberately invented as means of obtaining money and influence. The apostles, according to this charge, had, by sheer falsehood and in their own interests, constructed the doctrines of the power of the risen Christ and his second coming, and had perhaps even concocted the gospel narratives. Curiously enough, the word translated 'cunningly devise' (*sophizein*) only occurs elsewhere in the N. T. in one passage in the sense of 'make wise,' 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'The sacred writings which are able to *make thee wise* unto salvation.'

power: the 'Divine power' which 'hath granted us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,' i. 3.

coming (*parousia*): the technical term for the looked-for reappearance of Jesus on earth, see on Jas. v. 7, 8. The early church had expected this *parousia* speedily, and many had understood that the apostles promised the *parousia* in the near future. To them, therefore, the failure of this supposed promise dis-

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[1] The Greek words for 'signify' are different in the two passages.

Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:

credited the apostolic teaching, both as to any *parousia* at all, and with regard to everything else.

eyewitnesses of his majesty. The reply was that 'the power and coming' of Christ were guaranteed by his 'majesty'; the manifestation of his greatness, that is to say by the beauty and power of his life and teaching, by his miracles, and above all by the Transfiguration. The authority of the apostles rested on the fact that they had been eyewitnesses of all these things, especially of the last named. The word for 'majesty' (*megaleiotēs*, 'greatness') only occurs elsewhere in the N. T. in Acts xix. 27, the 'magnificence' of Diana, and at the close of the narrative of the healing of the demoniac after the Transfiguration, Luke ix. 43, 'They were all astonished at the majesty of God.' Possibly the writer in 2 Peter is simply thinking of the Transfiguration, but the principle, that the saving power of Christ is guaranteed by what men saw and heard of him, obviously applies to all his earthly life.

'Eyewitness[1]' sometimes means in classical Greek 'one initiated into the innermost secrets of the Eleusinian mysteries,' the word here may imply 'We are in the best possible position for knowing the exact truth about everything in the life of Christ.' It more probably means 'eyewitness' in a perfectly general sense. The word occurs only here in the N. T., but the corresponding verb is used in 1 Pet. ii. 12, iii. 2, in a general sense, of the heathen 'beholding' the consistent lives of believers.

17. honour and glory: an expression not of two distinct ideas, but of a single idea, emphasized by the use of two synonyms.

such a voice: i. e. an utterance as follows, 'This is my,' &c.; perhaps even = of the wonderful character shewn by the following words.

from: *lit.* uttered by.

excellent glory: a periphrasis for 'God' like the 'Majesty on high' (Heb. i. 3), 'Excellent' (*megaloprepēs*), *lit.* 'befitting a great man.' Thus the phrase includes the ideas of 'majesty' and 'glory,' and suggests that the 'majesty' and 'glory' of Christ corresponded to those of the Father, from whom they were derived.

This is my beloved Son, &c. The utterance is given here as in Matt. xvii. 5, with the omission of the concluding clause, 'Hear ye him,' and two or three slight verbal changes. Mark

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[1] *ἐπόπτης.*

and this voice we *ourselves* heard come out of heaven, 18
when we were with him in the holy mount. And we 19

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ix. 7 and some MSS. of Luke ix. 35 have 'This is my beloved Son: hear ye him' but in Luke R. V. reads 'This is my Son, my chosen, hear ye him.' The utterance at the Baptism is given, Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22, as 'Thou art' (Matthew, 'This is') 'my beloved Son; in thee' (Matthew, 'whom') 'I am well pleased.'

18. we ourselves. The R. V. adds '*ourselves*' to express the marked emphasis which the Greek idiom lays upon the 'we.' 'We' is not used loosely of a number of people who might be said to have heard through what actually came to the ears of some of their number.

out of heaven: in the Synoptics 'out of the cloud.'

the holy mount. Matthew and Mark tells us that on the occasion of the Transfiguration Christ took the three up into a high mountain apart by themselves. Luke says that he took them with him, and went up into the mountain to pray. The mount was 'holy' because the Transfiguration took place upon it.

The similarities between this paragraph and the Synoptics do not prove that the author was acquainted with those documents. All the information implied here might have been obtained from oral tradition, or from written sources of our Gospels. On the other hand, the slight differences do not shew that the writer was not acquainted with one or more of the Synoptics. He certainly assumes that his readers were familiar with the narrative of the Transfiguration. The language of the paragraph affords no strong evidence either for or against the Petrine authorship. It is not quite clear why the Transfiguration is singled out as the one occasion on which Christ 'received honour and glory from God.' Outside of the Synoptic Gospels this is the only reference the N. T. makes to that event. Elsewhere the appeal is chiefly to the Resurrection, e. g. Rom. i. 4, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead.' But, after the earliest period of the church, the distinction of having been an eyewitness of the Transfiguration was almost peculiar to Peter; he shared it only with John. Paul obviously could make no claim to it, while he considered that the vision near Damascus made him an eyewitness of the Resurrection. It was natural that an Epistle written by Peter, or in his name, should cite this special distinction in support of his authority. The Transfiguration, too, might well be understood as a manifestation of Christ's Divine majesty, and as foreshadowing and assuring his second coming in the glory of the Father.

i. 19-21. *Prophecy.*

The Transfiguration confirmed the apostles in their faith in

have the word of prophecy *made* more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your
20 hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture
21 is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came

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the promises and predictions of the O. T. These, therefore, may be confidently appealed to in support of apostolic teaching, if only their Divine source is recognized, and they are interpreted under the guidance of the Divine spirit, and not according to individual interest and prejudice.

19. we: either Christians generally, or the eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration. Cf. on verses 1 and 4.

the word of prophecy: the O. T.

made **more sure:** i. e. by the Transfiguration. The glorification of Christ on that occasion, regarded as a partial fulfilment of O. T. sayings concerning the Messiah, made the apostles more certain that they would be completely fulfilled by the second coming.

The A. V., 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy,' represents an alternative view of the passage, i. e. We have also in the written word, the O. T., a witness to the truth of our teaching which is even surer than the evidence afforded by the Transfiguration, inasmuch as that event was only witnessed by ourselves, and the Scriptures are open to all, and their authority is universally accepted, especially by the Jews.

a lamp . . . in a dark place. An equivalent phrase is used of the prophet Ezra in II (IV) Esdras xii. 42. A lamp can only imperfectly illuminate a limited space for a few people, so the O. T. was an elementary revelation given to a single race. The word for 'dark' (*auchmēros*) is rare and late; it only occurs here in the N. T.; its literal meaning is 'squalid.' 'The dark place' is the world, so far as it lacks Divine light.

the day: the coming of Christ.

the day-star (*phōsphoros*). Only here in the N. T.; usually the planet Venus. The day-star arising in our hearts will be the inner premonitions which announce the coming, as the day-star heralds the dawn; such premonitions might be occasioned by observing the various 'signs' of the coming.

20. prophecy of scripture: i. e. contained in the O. T., 'the word of prophecy.'

private (*idias*, R. V. marg., 'special') **interpretation.** The interpretation of Scripture is not to be controlled by the caprice of individuals, but by general principles of exegesis under the guidance of the Spirit. The clause is directed against the by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.

But there arose false prophets also among the people, 2

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mistaken use of Scripture by the false teachers dealt with in the next chapter. The same idea is variously expressed now-a-days, e.g.: The individual Christian should submit his interpretation of the Bible to the judgement of the church; or, more accurately, In forming his opinion on such matters, the individual should take into account the opinions and experience of his fellow Christians, and the general results of Biblical study.

Another explanation is: No prophecy is its own interpretation, but can only be understood by its fulfilment.

Slight alterations of reading, e.g. *epēluseos* (approach, origin), for *epiluseos* (interpretation), have been proposed, in order to obtain the meaning, 'No prophecy has its source in an individual, but in God.' This would be simpler, and would connect more easily with the following verse.

21. no prophecy . . . came by the will of man: but men spake from God, . . . moved by the Holy Ghost. A man could not produce a prophecy because he wished to do so, by the mere exercise of such powers—observation, foresight, reasoning, imagination—as his own will could set in motion; there must be also the suggestion and illumination of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the author implies, man cannot understand the Scriptures without the aid of the same Spirit.

The best authorities, MSS., &c., are divided between 'holy men of God spake' and 'men spake from God.'

This paragraph is obscure in the original, and there is much controversy as to its exact interpretation.

ii. 1–3. *The false teachers.*

The O. T. has not only foretold the coming and glory of Christ, and the blessedness of his people, but also affords examples of false teachers who led away many of the chosen race. These examples are a warning that similar trials will befall the church. Cf. Jude 4.

2 Pet. ii. 1—iii. 3 is based on Jude 4–18; cf. synopsis in Introduction to 2 Peter, pp. 58 ff.

1. false prophets. Cf. the numerous passages in which the canonical prophets denounce the bulk of the prophetic order as false teachers, who nevertheless were followed by the people generally; see especially 1 Kings xxii; Jer. xxiii; Ezek. xiii; Amos vii. 14; Zech. xiii. 2–6. The 'false prophets' falsely professed to be prophets, and so the 'false teachers' falsely claimed to be inspired teachers.

as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves
2 swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be
3 evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction

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there shall be. Verses 9 ff. shew that there were already false teachers in the churches. Here, however, a general principle is laid down; the analogy of the past shews that there always will be false teachers: cf. on iii. 3.

heresies: R. V. marg., 'sects'; *haireseis*, usually in the N. T. = 'sects,' Acts xxiv. 5, 'the sect of the Nazarenes'; here perhaps 'doctrinal errors.' The rest of the chapter shews that these errors were not concerned with abstract dogma, but with practical Antinomian teaching, i. e. the contention that Christian teaching justified lax morality.

denying even the Master. See on Jude 4. Where, as here, our author reproduced Jude verbally, he used the main idea of the original, and connected that with his own treatment of his subject, but in the case of some details of language he may not have thought out or indicated their special meaning in the new context. Such details are given simply as part of the quotation.

that bought them. Cf. 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23, 'Ye were bought with a price'; and 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 'Ye were redeemed . . . with precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ.'

2. lascivious doings (*aselgeiais*). See on 1 Pet. iv. 3. The A. V., 'pernicious ways,' is a doubtful translation of a badly supported reading, *apōleiais*.

way of the truth. 'Way' is used as a kind of technical term for the Christian faith and life in Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, &c.

3. feigned (*plastois*) **words,** *lit.* 'moulded,' 'fabricated,' false professions of zeal and disinterestedness, and false claims to speak with inspired authority, 'cunningly devised fables,' such as our author repudiates in i. 16.

make merchandise of you. Cf. on 'Shepherds that . . . feed themselves' (Jude 12).

sentence . . . from of old. See on Jude 4, here simplified.

lingereth not, . . . slumbereth not. Sentence and doom are personified; they had not yet overtaken their victims, but they were hot-foot on their track.

slumbereth not. For if God spared not angels when 4
they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed
them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement;

ii. 4–10ᵃ. *Their doom.*

The certainty of the punishment of the false teachers and the deliverance of the faithful shewn from the fate of the fallen angels, the antediluvians, and Sodom and Gomorrah; and the escape of Noah and Lot.

4–9. (See on Jude **6**.) **If God spared not . . . the Lord knoweth how,** &c. God's past dealings are a revelation of His power, wisdom, and righteousness; and as these are permanent, history, properly understood, shews us how He will act in days to come.

4. This verse is simplified from Jude **6**.

sinned: referring to Gen. vi. 1 and the legends connected with it.

cast them down to hell: the translation of a single word, *tartarōsas*, 'Tartarus-ed,' only used here in the N. T., and very rarely elsewhere. Tartarus is properly the name for the deepest abyss, far below Hades, but comes to be used sometimes as a synonym for Hades. Tartarus figures in the classical counterpart of the legend of the Fall of the Angels; the Titans who rebelled against the gods were cast into Tartarus. It is possible that the parallel may have suggested the use of the word here; but it is more probably intended as an equivalent for *aidiois*, understood as 'of Hades,' in Jude **6** (which see). Tartarus is never referred to elsewhere in the N. T., but the word is used in the LXX of Job xli. 31, but apparently through an error of the translators. *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*[1] makes Enoch say, 'The men . . . shewed me the darkness, and there I saw the prisoners [the angels] suspended, reserved for (and) awaiting the eternal judgment.'

R. V. marg. hast 'cast them into dungeons,' understanding the allusion to Tartarus as figurative.

pits of darkness. The best authorities are divided here between 'pits' (*sirois* or *seirois*) and 'chains' (*seirais*); the best MSS. have 'pits,' most versions 'chains,' both can be illustrated from the apocryphal accounts of the fallen angels. Neither word occurs elsewhere in the N. T., but *seira* (chain) is found three times in the LXX. Jude 6 has 'bonds' (*desmois*).

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[1] Chap. vii. 1. Rev. R. H. Charles, the editor of the English translation, connects this with our passage, which it resembles rather more closely than it does Jude 6.

5 and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah
with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he
6 brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and
turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes
condemned them with an overthrow, having made them
7 an example unto those that should live ungodly; and
delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious
8 life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among
them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul

5. (No parallel in Jude.) Apparently added to bring in the idea that though ruin overtakes sinners, the righteous are delivered; similarly, our Epistle follows Jude in speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah, but adds the deliverance of Lot, which Jude does not mention.

a preacher of righteousness. Genesis does not mention this, but it might reasonably be inferred from the fact that Noah was a righteous man in the midst of an evil generation. Accordingly Josephus[1] tells us that Noah tried to persuade his contemporaries to mend their ways.

6. (See on Jude 7.) **the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah:** may mean simply Sodom and Gomorrah, or may be meant to include the neighbouring towns, as in Jude.

with an overthrow. 'Overthrow' (*katastrophē*) is almost a technical term in the LXX for the destruction of these cities. The translation here should rather be 'to an overthrow'; the cities were reduced to ashes, and condemned to perpetual ruin. The phrase is omitted by some of the best MSS.

example. The fate of these cities is constantly cited as an example of Divine justice, Isa. i. 9; Matt. x. 15. 'It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah,' &c. (xi. 23; Rom. ix. 29).

7. Verses 7-9 have no parallel in Jude; cf. on verse 5. Wisd. of Sol. x. 6-9 cites the example of Sodom and Gomorrah, and says of Lot, 'While the ungodly were perishing, wisdom delivered a righteous man.'

wicked (*athesmōn*): *lit.* 'not submitting to law.' In the N. T. only here and iii. 17; in the latter passage of the false teachers.

8. that righteous man. The Vatican MS. omits 'that'; its text would mean 'he, because he was righteous.'

vexed: *lit.* 'tortured.'

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[1] *Antiquities*, I. iii. 1.

from day to day with *their* lawless deeds): the Lord 9
knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and
to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the
day of judgement; but chiefly them that walk after the 10
flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion.

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from day to day. Not expressly stated in Gen. xix, but a natural conclusion from that narrative.

9. the Lord knoweth. Verse 9 is the apodosis or second half of the conditional sentence of which the whole of verses 4–8 constitute the protasis or first half. Perhaps, however, by the time the author reached the end of verse 8, he had forgotten all about the 'if' in verse 4; and so, supposing he had finished a complete sentence, began afresh in verse 9.

godly. See on 'godliness,' i. 3.

temptation. See on Jas. i. 2; according to some MSS. 'temptations,' as A. V. Noah and Lot might be tempted by the example and solicitation of their neighbours, just as the Christians were by false teachers; but the context cites cases where righteous men were delivered from the troubles in which they were involved through their neighbours' sins. Perhaps, therefore, we should take *peirasmos* here, as in 1 Pet. i. 6, in the sense of 'trial.'

under punishment. Punishment is not wholly postponed to a future judgement, but begins with, and continues from, the commission of sin. The rendering of the A. V. 'to be punished' is not probable. In the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, vii. 1, it is said that the imprisoned angels were 'continually tortured.'

the day of judgement. This phrase represents the O. T. 'Day of Jehovah,' the decisive crisis at which God manifests Himself to vindicate righteousness. In the N. T. this 'day' is associated with the second coming of Christ to judge the world. Our passage is usually understood to mean that the wicked already suffer for sin, but that the full measure of their punishment will be inflicted hereafter. It has also been held that the use of the term 'judgement' implies that their fate is not yet fixed, and that the future 'day' may bring deliverance to some now 'kept under punishment.'

10^a. (See on Jude 8^a.) **but chiefly them,** &c. A direct application to the false teachers attacked by this Epistle (cf. verses 1, 2).

walk after the flesh. So the fallen angels and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah.

despise dominion. The angels rebelled against God; the antediluvians turned a deaf ear to Noah; and the men of Sodom

Daring, selfwilled, they tremble not to rail at dignities:
11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgement against them before the Lord.
12 But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be
13 destroyed, suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing;

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would not listen to Lot or the angels. For 'dominion' see on Jude 8.

ii. 10ᵇ–16. *Their character and conduct.*

Description of the false teachers—as truculent, abusive, debauched, rushing blindly to destruction, involving others in sin and ruin, and going astray through greed of gain, like Balaam.

10ᵇ. See on Jude 8ᵇ.

11. See also on Jude 9, of which this is a generalization.

greater . . . against them. 'Them' is ambiguous; apparently heavenly 'dignities.' Our Epistle replaces the special case of Michael and the devil by a general principle—when good angels withstand 'dignities,' i. e. evil angels, although the good angels are the more powerful, they do not abuse their opponents. The moral is—How absurd and wicked it is for *evil* men to abuse *good* angels, or perhaps even the legitimate church authorities.

before the Lord. Omitted by some MSS., &c.

12. See also on Jude 10, to which this verse is substantially equivalent.

born mere animals to be taken and destroyed. A development of the 'animally'; R. V. 'naturally' in Jude 10. As animals are trapped through their eagerness to satisfy their appetite, so self-indulgence betrayed these men to their ruin. Alternative renderings are—'Born with a natural tendency to be,' &c.; or, 'Born with a natural inclination to take and destroy.'

in their destroying: i. e. apparently 'while they are engaged in destroying the peace, faith, and morals of the church'; R. V. marg., 'in their corruption.' But it should probably be translated 'in their destruction,' i. e. that of the animals, referring to the phrase 'born mere animals.'

13ᵃ. (No exact parallel in Jude.) **suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing.** The R. V. imitates a play upon words in the Greek—*adikoumenoi*, 'suffering wrong'; *adikia*, 'wrong-doing.' The natural meaning of the R. V. as English is—Having done wrong to others, deceived, cheated, robbed, they incur the retribution of being similarly wronged themselves. But this can scarcely be the meaning of the Greek; the whole context is *men* that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their love-feasts while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that 14

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concerned with the total ruin of these men by Divine punishment, and there is nothing to lead up to the special and limited idea of the suffering of sinners at the hands of fellow sinners. Again, in verse 15, 'the hire of wrong-doing' means the gratification and advantage which men hope to attain from sin. Hence we should rather translate 'being defrauded of the hire,' &c., i. e. sin promises pleasures, which its votaries fail to obtain.

Another reading is, 'being about to receive the hire,' &c., 'hire' being used sarcastically; they sinned for hire, with a view to pleasure, and will receive hire, but it will be destruction. Cf. Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death.' The MSS., &c.. are divided between the two readings, and neither gives a very good sense. Perhaps neither is the original text, which may have been quite lost.

The following lines explain the 'hire,' viz. luxurious living, 13; the gratification of lust, 14; and wealth, 15.

men **that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time.** For 'pleasure' (*hedonē*) see on Jas. iv. 1. 'In the day-time' (*en hēmera*) has been taken to mean (1) 'day after day,' a continual round of selfish and gross enjoyment; (2) in the day-time as distinguished from the night; (3) 'for a day,' i. e. only in this present earthly life; they had no idea of any pleasure in anything beyond mere earthly luxury, as we say 'mere ephemeral pleasures.' Still, it seems doubtful whether the Greek can mean (1) or even (3), and (2) seems to give a poor sense. Possibly *en hēmera* may mean (4) 'in a day of judgement,' i. e. in a great crisis of the history of the church and the world they were merely occupied with sensual pleasures. Cf. Jas. v. 5, 'Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter.' The verb for 'lived delicately' (*etruphēsate*) is cognate to the noun *truphē*, translated 'to revel.' In considering (1), (3), (4), it must be remembered that the Greek of this Epistle is very peculiar.

13^b. See on Jude 12^a.

love-feasts (*agapais*). The Vatican MS. and some other authorities read 'deceivings' (*apatais*), i. e. 'delusions' as to the advantage of sin, delusions held by the false teachers, and caused by them in others. It is uncertain which reading is original; either makes good sense.

14. (No parallel in Jude.)

adultery: *lit.* 'adulteress' according to some of the best MSS., others read 'adultery.'

cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having
a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing;
15 forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed
the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the hire
16 of wrong-doing; but he was rebuked for his own transgression:
a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed
17 the madness of the prophet. These are springs without
water, and mists driven by a storm; for whom the
18 blackness of darkness hath been reserved. For, uttering
great swelling *words* of vanity, they entice in the lusts of
the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping

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children of cursing: worthily accursed. Cf. Eph. ii. 3, 'children of wrath'; and 2 Thess. ii. 3, 'son of perdition.' This judgement sums up verses 13, 14.

15, 16. In these verses our Epistle expands one of the three O. T. examples of error dealt with in Jude 11, which see. For the story of Balaam see Num. xxii, xxiii, xxxi. 8, 16.

ii. 17–19. *Their bad influence.*

These false teachers will be punished most especially because they seduce into sharing their wickedness and ruin those who are escaping from sin.

17. See on Jude 13; after which there follows in Jude 14, 15, the quotation from the *Book of Enoch*, omitted here, probably on account of its apocryphal character.

18ᵃ. (See on Jude 16ᵇ.) **For, uttering great swelling** words **of vanity.** In Jude this is merely one amongst other objectionable traits of the characters depicted; here bluster is one of the means by which they delude their dupes.

At this point the former and longer of the two sections dependent on Jude closes, and the remainder of the chapter has no exact parallel in that Epistle.

18ᵇ. in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness. The example of their own self-indulgence, combined with the specious sophistries and brazen impudence by which it was justified, appealed to the latent passions of their victims.

just (*oligôs*): *lit.* 'a little,' i.e. either 'recently,' or 'a little way,' or 'in small measure'; a rare word, only occurring here in the N. T. Some MSS. have *ontōs*, 'actually, really'; A. V. 'clean.'

who are just escaping. These are the 'unstedfast souls' of verse 14, recent converts too little disciplined in the Christian life to resist alluring temptations, backed up by arguments too

from them that live in error; promising them liberty, 19
while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for
of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought
into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the defile- 20

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specious to be refuted from their limited knowledge and experience. No doubt one reason why the Epistle was written was derived from the actual perversion of such 'babes in Christ.' The author is naturally moved to hot indignation by the cowardly and selfish treachery of those professed to be Christian teachers. Cf. our Lord's saying (Matt. xviii. 6), 'Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.'

them that live in error. The 'error' of the false teachers is spoken of in ii. 15, iii. 17; but the phrase here cannot denote them, but rather the heathen to whom those 'just escaping' had recently belonged.

19. of whom a man is overcome. The R. V. marg. 'of what' is preferable, the reference being to the evil desires which mastered the false teachers.

ii. 20-22. *The doom of backsliders.*

The disastrous consequences of falling from grace.

20-22. It is a matter of controversy whether these verses refer to the false teachers or to the recent converts whom they had led astray.

In favour of referring them to the false teachers, we have the following points: (*a*) They would form a natural climax of the description of the guilt and doom of those teachers. (*b*) As it is the teachers who are 'overcome' in verse 19, 'overcome' in 20 will probably refer to the same persons. (*c*) If the verses are referred to converts who had been deceived and betrayed through weakness and inexperience, they seem unduly harsh.

In favour of referring the verses to the recent converts, we have: (*a*) Those who, in verse 20, are entangled in defilements after they have escaped are naturally identified with those who, in verse 19, are enticed by lust when they are just escaping. In answer to this, it is said that the same persons would not be spoken of in two consecutive verses as 'just escaping' and 'having escaped.' Yet these varying expressions might denote the same state looked at from different points of view. Because their conversion was recent, they were 'just escaping'; but they might also be thought of as 'having escaped,' because conversion in the N. T. is commonly described as a single complete act. (*b*) If these verses are referred to the teachers, they involve a recognition of their having

ments of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with
21 them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered

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once attained to full Christian status. Such recognition is not found elsewhere in the Epistle, unless it be in ii. 1, and would have been definitely stated and not merely implied if it had been in the writer's mind. (*c*) The utter and hopeless ruin which these teachers brought upon their misguided disciples would be a very effective climax; it would bring out most clearly the pernicious character of the teaching, and would be an impressive appeal to any of the readers who were likely to be led astray.

The weight of authority supports the reference to the teachers.

20. For: either explaining the previous clause; or, perhaps, resuming the 'for' in verse 18, and giving an additional reason for the punishment of the false teachers, viz. the irretrievable nature of the harm done by them to their disciples.

world. See on Jas. i. 27.

knowledge of. See on i. 2. Moral reform is, on one side, a matter of enlightenment, of opening the eyes to a higher standard of conduct, and to the beauty of noble lives, above all others that of Christ.

the last state, &c. Similarly, our Lord said of the man from whom an evil spirit departed, but afterwards returned with seven others worse than himself, 'The last state of that man becometh worse than the first' (Matt. xii. 43-45).

21. it were better, &c. Had they never known the gospel, there would have been some hope that its influence might have reached and saved them; but now it has been tried and failed, and there is no more effective means of salvation. So Heb. vi. 4-6, 'As touching those who were once enlightened . . . it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance'; and Heb. x. 26, 'If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins.'

known . . . knowing: the verb *epignōskein* corresponding to the noun *epignōsis* for 'knowledge.'

commandment (*entolē*): a single ordinance, as distinguished from *nomos*, 'law,' a legislative system. It is noteworthy that here, as in iii. 2 and 1 Tim. vi. 14, the whole ethical aspect of Christianity is spoken of as a 'commandment.' Such a usage is consistent with the fact that, whereas the Mosaic law consisted of a multitude of

unto them. It has happened unto them according to 22
the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit
again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the
mire.

This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write 3

'commandments' as to details of conduct, Christianity lays down a few comprehensive principles.

delivered unto them. Cf. Jude 3, 'The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.'

22. The dog, &c. Prov. xxvi. 11, 'As a dog that returneth to his vomit, so is a fool that repeateth his folly.' The 'fool' in such O. T. passages is usually understood to be wilfully and therefore wickedly foolish. It is quite possible, however, that both this and the following proverb were immediately derived from current sayings.

the sow, &c. There is no scriptural parallel to this saying[1]. The point of these two proverbs is that the sins to which the renegades had returned were utterly loathsome, and that their fall from grace shewed that the inclination to such sins was ingrained in their very nature, like the canine or swinish predilection for filth. These truths are quite sufficient to justify the use of the illustrations; they cannot be pressed further without going beyond what was in the author's mind, and thus raising irrelevant difficulties.

iii. 1-4. *Motive for writing.*

The author has been moved to write this—his second letter to his readers—to remind them of the teaching of the prophets and apostles, and especially of their warnings that, after the first period of the church's history was ended, men would arise who would laugh at the idea of any second coming, and justify sinful self-indulgence by the long delay of the Lord.

1-3. We have here a second shorter section of our Epistle in which the author has worked up and supplemented material from Jude (cf. Jude 17, 18).

1. In its phraseology and formality this verse reads rather like the opening of an epistle. Hence it has been supposed that chap. iii. is a separate epistle combined by mistake with i. and ii. But this verse is, in reality, an emphatic resumption of i. 12, 13, intended to lay special stress on the explanation of the appearance of the false teachers.

now[2] (already): can hardly be rhetorical; is sometimes

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[1] Cf. a saying in Heraclitus, *Hühn*, p. 135. [2] ἤδη.

unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere
2 mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should
remember the words which were spoken before by the
holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and
3 Saviour through your apostles: knowing this first, that in

explained 'at my (Peter's) advanced age.' It perhaps means 'within a short time.'

second. 1 Peter being the first; cf. Introduction, p. 36.

stir up, &c.: repeating i. 12, 13.

sincere (*eilikrinēs*). Elsewhere in the N. T. only Phil. i. 10, 'That ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ'; it is used in Wisd. of Sol. vii. 25 (R. V. 'clear'), 'She (Wisdom) is . . . a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty.' The corresponding noun occurs only in 1 Cor. v. 8, 'the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'; 2 Cor. i. 12, 'in holiness and sincerity of God . . . we behaved ourselves'; ii. 17, 'as of sincerity . . . as of God, in the sight of God.' Lightfoot on Phil. i. 10 says of the word, 'signifies properly "distinct, unmixed," and hence "pure, unsullied."'

mind[1]: the active, practical intellect. While the judgement of the false teachers was vitiated by self-indulgence and self-interest, faithful believers had their minds clear of any such distracting influences; they were 'single-minded.' If they exercised their moral faculty they would decide rightly; the only danger lay in their being overawed by the apparent authority of the false teachers; hence the writer 'stirs up their sincere mind.'

2. (See on Jude 17, and Introduction, pp. 60 f.) Here, as elsewhere, our Epistle generalizes what in Jude is particular. In Jude the readers are exhorted to remember a particular utterance; here their attention is first called to the whole O. and N. T. revelation, and Jude's special point is introduced separately in the next verse. The O. T. passages and the sayings of Christ and the apostles which our author has in mind are chiefly those which were applied to the second coming of Christ.

commandment. See on ii. 21.

your apostles: the apostles through whom they received the teaching of Christ. A. V. 'of us the apostles' is a doubtful rendering of an incorrect reading.

3. (See on Jude 18.) **knowing this first, that.** The same phrase is used in i. 20. The fact mentioned in this verse was to be specially borne in mind, because it met the crucial difficulty of the hour, the appearance of the false teachers.

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[1] *διάνοια.*

the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise 4 of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they wilfully forget, that 5

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the last days: the time in which the author is writing.

mockers: the false teachers.

shall come. See on ii. 1. If the Epistle was not written by Peter, the author sometimes writes as in Peter's time, when the situation of the author's own period was still future, but sometimes does not trouble to adapt his tenses to this literary form, but writes as in his own time, when the false teachers were already present.

4. Where is the promise? i. e. its fulfilment. What becomes of the promise, seeing that circumstances shew (so they supposed) that it cannot and will not be fulfilled? 'The promise' does not mean some one particular saying, but the promise understood to be made in various ways in the O. T. and by our Lord and his apostles. The question may even challenge this understanding, and imply a denial that such a promise was ever given.

the fathers. Commonly used of the Israelites of the O. T., so Rom. ix. 5, of the Jews, 'whose are the fathers'; and Heb. i. 1, 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers.' The phrase is often so understood here, i. e. Through all the centuries since the promise was first made to ancient Israel, nothing has happened by way of even a small beginning of fulfilment, or to prepare the way for or indicate the coming of fulfilment; everything remains as it always was.

'Fathers,' however, has also been taken to mean the first generation of Christians. Such sayings of our Lord as Mark ix. 1, 'There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power,' were understood to mean that Christ would come again before all his contemporaries were dead. Hence, when they had all passed away, and he had not appeared, the promise of the second coming seemed finally and hopelessly discredited.

from the beginning of the creation: implying a further proof of the absurdity of the promise. The ancient order had lasted for ages, and was not likely to be upset; what always has been, so they insinuated, always will be, and always ought to be.

iii. 5-7. *Answer to the 'mockers.'*

The premise of their argument is false, and they know it to be false. The world has not always continued as it was since

there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted
6 out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by
which means the world that then was, being overflowed
7 with water, perished: but the heavens that now are, and
the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire,
being reserved against the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men.

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the creation; there was the Flood. All through the ages before that event, the waters which were to execute God's judgement were there ready to work out His will, and yet forming part of what seemed an unchanging order. The Flood is a precedent for other cataclysms; and now fire awaits the Divine commission.

5. For this they wilfully forget. They could not persuade themselves that the world had undergone no sweeping changes, unless they deliberately ignored well-known facts. Alternative renderings are, 'Because they wish this, i. e. that there should be no second coming, they forget'; and, 'When they hold this,' &c.

there were heavens, &c. The Epistle takes for granted that the present physical order dates from the Flood, and reminds its readers that there were heavens and earth before that event.

an earth compacted out of water, &c. Gen. i. 6–10, where both earth and heaven are constituted from the waters.

6. by which means: plural, either because in Genesis we have 'waters' in two bodies, above and below the firmament; or with reference to both the water and the word.

world (*kosmos*) (see on Jas. i. 27): heaven and earth (cf. 7^a); or, less probably, the living creatures on the earth.

perished. Does not mean that the physical universe was annihilated, but that the old order or system of nature (*kosmos*) passed away. According to Jewish legends the effects of the Flood extended to heaven as well as earth.

7. stored up for fire, &c. The judgement of sinners in the overthrow of the present dispensation is a long-standing purpose of God (cf. Jude 14, 15). Fire is often spoken of in the O. T. as destroying Jerusalem, Babylon, &c., and is a common figure for God's judgement upon sinners. The passing away or perishing of heaven and earth is announced in Ps. cii. 26; Rev. xxi. 1; *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, lxv. 6; but our passage is the only really explicit statement in the Bible of the final destruction of the physical universe by fire. Even here, as destruction is also applied to the Flood, it means radical reconstitution rather than annihilation. Josephus, *Antiquities*, I. ii. 3, states that Adam predicted

But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day 8
is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand

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that the universe would be twice destroyed, once by fire and once by water.

The R. V. marg. has 'stored with fire,' which would make the reference to fire more closely parallel to the way in which water is spoken of: as the ancient world included as an essential and important element the water which was to be the instrument of its ruin, so the present world was stored with the fire by which it would ultimately be consumed. It is very doubtful whether the Greek can bear this meaning. Some MSS. have 'preserved in fire.'

iii. 8–10. *Delay of second coming.*

Explanation of the long delay in the coming of Christ. Time with God is other than it is with us, so different that we cannot criticize His dealings in this respect. If He delays it is to lengthen out the period during which men may repent and be saved. After all, whenever the end comes it will be unexpected.

8. one day . . . as a thousand years. A kind of deduction from the following quotation.

a thousand years as one day. Ps. xc. 4, 'For a thousand years in thy sight are as the day[1], yesterday[1], when it is past, and as a watch in the night,' i. e. in the endless ages of the Divine existence a thousand years count for less than a day in the short life of man. Here this simple idea becomes a general principle and is further extended by the preceding clause. The starting-point of the controversy must have been an arithmetical interpretation of a reference to a period of time in some inspired saying, which extorted from it a prediction of the exact date of the second coming, perhaps according to the latter view of 'the fathers' in verse 4. The failure of this prediction gave the false teachers a pretext for discrediting the teaching it misinterpreted. But, in spiritual utterances, measures of time and space are often mere figurative aids to our feeble understanding, and we go utterly astray if we try to treat them as if they occurred in a mathematical formula. A 'day' or 'a thousand years' are merely periods of time; with Him to-day has its permanent, eternal issues; it is no more over and done with at nightfall than if it lasted a thousand years; and, on the other hand, all the events of the next thousand years are as real and present to Him as if they were happening now. Hence, in speaking of spiritual things, it is natural to speak of the present as embracing the future, and the future as included

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[1] Lit. tr. of LXX.

9 years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that
10 all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dis-

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in the present; but such modes of speech must not be interpreted as giving definite information as to the dates of particular events.

9. The Lord is not slack . . . but is longsuffering. Ecclus. xxxv. 18 says of the punishment of the wicked, 'The Lord will not be slack, neither will he be longsuffering toward them.'

to you-ward: implying that there were amongst his readers those who had gone astray, who were not yet hopelessly entangled in their former sins (ii. 20), but might repent.

not wishing, &c. Cf. Ezek. xviii. 32, 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves and live.'

10. the day of the Lord will come as a thief: i. e. giving no warning of its coming; perhaps quoted from 1 Thess. v. 2, 'For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night,' or what was 'perfectly known' to Paul's contemporaries may have been a current saying. The same figure is used in Matt. xxiv. 43; Luke xii. 39; Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15 of our Lord's coming. Delay was not to lull them into a false security.

Here 'in the night' in the A. V. is a copyist's addition, borrowed from 1 Thessalonians.

the heavens shall pass away, &c. Perhaps based on the saying recorded in Mark xiii. 24, 'In those days . . . the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken.' Cf. Isa. xxxiv. 4, 'All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fade away'; also li. 6, and the quotation of these passages in Heb. i. 10-12.

with a great noise (*roizēdon*). Only here in the N. T. The noun, *roizos*, is used of the whizzing of an arrow or a scourge, or of the rustling of wings. Here it refers to the crackling and roaring of fire.

elements (*stoicheia*). Either, as A. V. and R .V., i. e. 'the materials of the physical universe,' implying not merely the destruction of the order of the universe, but its annihilation; or, as R. V. marg., 'heavenly bodies,' a closer parallel to Mark. A third

solved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these 11
things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy living and godliness, looking 12

view has met with some acceptance recently, viz. that the *stoicheia* are 'the elementary spirits, dwelling in the world, which have been sent forth by God to animate the dead matter[1].'

with fervent heat: *lit.* 'being burnt up.'

burned up (*katakaēsetai*). Neither this reading nor 'disappear' (*aphanisthēsontai*) are very strongly supported. The best attested reading is 'discovered' (*eurethēsetai*), which does not make sense. The original reading has perhaps disappeared, but it must have been a word meaning 'burned up,' or 'disappeared,' or something similar. Some authorities omit the whole clause, 'And the earth . . . burned up,' doubtless on account of the difficulty in the reading. Westcott and Hort suggest that the original reading was *ruēsetai* or *rusetai*, 'flow away.'

These pictures give us the form in which our author naturally expressed the truth of a coming judgement and end of the present dispensation. But the principle which he himself applies in verse 8 to the interpretation of descriptions of time in inspired utterances must also be applied to such descriptions of physical phenomena. An examination of the context of this and similar passages, e. g. those referred to in the first note on this verse, shew that they are largely figurative.

iii. 11–13. *Practical application.*

The prospect of the terrible close of the present dispensation and the hope of a more blessed future ought to be a powerful incentive to holy living.

11. holy living and godliness. The Greek words are plural, expressing 'all kinds of'; hence the addition of *all* in our versions.

12. (See also on verse 10.) **earnestly desiring.** Only holy living could render such a desire possible. R. V. marg. 'hastening,' a more usual meaning of the word. According to verse 9 the Divine forbearance waits in order to afford certain persons an opportunity of repentance; if all embrace this opportunity there will be no need of further delay. Moreover, the holy life of believers is the most convincing testimony to the gospel. When all Christians practise all holy living and godliness, the work for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

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[1] Spitta apud E. Kühl (Meyer).

13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace,

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of the church will be perfected, because it can do nothing more to win the world. Another rendering is 'hastening on to.'

coming of the day of God. A unique phrase; elsewhere 'coming' (*parousia*) is either followed by 'Christ,' 'Lord,' or some other person, or used absolutely to mean 'the coming of the Lord'; and similarly we have 'the day of the Lord,' &c., never 'of God.' Perhaps we should translate 'the coming of Christ in the day of God.' Some copyists have substituted the more usual 'Lord' for 'God.'

by reason of which. Either the coming or the day, it makes no difference to the sense. The purpose of the present heavens and earth is to serve the present dispensation, the close of which is a sufficient reason for their dissolution.

13. his. Either God, referred to in the previous verse, or Christ; or perhaps our Epistle is not careful to define which is meant.

new heavens and a new earth. First promised in Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22; and seen in vision replacing the old in Rev. xxi. 1.

iii. 14-18. *Closing exhortation.*

With such prospects in view, seek earnestly to attain to a holy life and the peace that accompanies it. Do not let the delay of judgement render you careless; remember that, as Paul constantly taught, the Divine forbearance gives you added opportunities of obtaining salvation. And, speaking of Paul's Epistles, we would remind you that they are sometimes obscure and liable to be misunderstood; and ignorant men, hesitating between right and wrong, have wrested from such passages a justification for choosing the wrong, and so have come to ruin. Do not follow their example, but rather grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, to whom be eternal glory.

14. ye may be found in peace: i.e. they may be able to confront the terrors of the second coming with serene confidence, perhaps we may also include the idea of being at peace among themselves. Others connect 'in peace' with 'look'; they would await the day without impatience.

without spot and blameless in his sight. And account 15
that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as
our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom
given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all *his* epistles, 16
speaking in them of these things; wherein are some
things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and

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without spot and blameless. The Greek *aspiloi kai amōmētoi* suggests a contrast to the false teachers, who are described (ii. 13) as *spiloi kai mōmoi*, 'spots and blemishes.'

15. account that, &c. Enforcing verse 9.

even as . . . Paul . . . wrote. A close parallel to 15[a] is Rom. ii. 4, 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' (cf. Rom. ix. 22); but this is scarcely a constant theme of the Pauline Epistles, and our Epistle can hardly have been intended to be understood as written to the Romans (see below on 'unto you'). The reference, therefore, seems to be chiefly to the exhortation to a moral life in verse 14; such exhortations are included in all the Pauline Epistles (see also on verse 16).

our beloved brother. Not only fellow Christian with Peter and those addressed, but colleague and brother apostle.

according to the wisdom given to him. A formal recognition of Paul's inspiration. This clause and the preceding, and 'the other scriptures' in verse 16, in a letter written in Peter's name, emphasize that harmony between the teaching and work of the two apostles which is implied by the Pauline character of 1 Peter. As there were sects in the second century which exalted Peter at the expense of Paul, the reference was partly introduced to afford an opportunity of calling attention to the harmony which really existed (see also on verse 16).

15, 16. unto you . . . also in all his epistles. This contrast implies a special reference to one or more of Paul's Epistles; according to some, Ephesians, because verse 14 might well refer to the hortatory section, Eph. v. 1–14; but the words may refer, as this verse states, to any of his Epistles. Probably the author, writing from Asia Minor, or some district in it, is thinking of the epistle or epistles addressed to that district; which again would point to one or all of the group Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians (see also above on 15[b]).

16. some things hard to be understood, &c. This is not a general reference to the obscure passages in the Pauline Epistles; the author has in mind particular passages which had been

unstedfast wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto
17 their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing
these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away
with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own sted-
18 fastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our

'wrested' with disastrous results. From the immediate context, verses 14, 15, the misinterpretation consisted in antinomianisms, obtaining from recognized Christian teaching a justification for sin; one of the chief objects of our Epistle is to combat such errors. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, not by works, and of subjection not under the law, but under grace, readily lent itself to such perversion; and has always been more or less perverted in this way by professing Christians. When the false teachers 'promised their disciples liberty' (ii. 19), they might quote such passages as Gal. v. 1, 'With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.' Paul himself was always conscious of the possibility that his teaching might be thus perverted, and repeatedly tried to guard against it, e.g. Gal. v. 13, 'For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion of the flesh.'

ignorant: unlearned, not trained in the study of Scripture, e.g. to give a modern application, not trained to interpret a passage by its context and according to the whole teaching of the work in which it stands, and in view of the circumstances and intention of the author; but taking isolated fragments in any sense that the mere words could be made to bear.

unstedfast. The false teachers are intended; in ii. 14 the term is used of their disciples. Steadfast loyalty to Christian faith and morality would have made it impossible to suppose that Paul sanctioned lax living; but men wavering between duty and self-indulgence, and inclining to the latter, were ready to catch at any pretext.

wrest: 'twist' or 'wrench,' especially 'to stretch on the rack, to torture.'

the other scriptures: the rest of the Bible, not merely the rest of the N.T. Cf. Introduction, pp. 65 ff.

17. wicked. See on ii. 7.

your stedfastness. The author's great anxiety as to the future conduct of his readers shews that their 'steadfastness' was not very assured, and that the false teachers were able and influential.

18. Cf. i. 2, 8.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

To him be the glory, &c. An abbreviated version of Jude 25; cf. also the doxologies, Rom. ix. 5, xi. 36, and xvi. 27, 'to him (whom) be the glory for ever'; Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 18; and Heb. xiii. 21, 'to whom be the glory for ever and ever'; 1 Pet. v. 11.

for ever: R. V. marg., '*Gr.* unto the day of eternity'; *lit.* 'of the age.' The phrase is different from that used in the doxologies just referred to, and only occurs here in the N. T. The phrase occurs in Ecclus. xviii. 10, 'As a drop of water from the sea, and a pebble from the sand; so are a few years in the day of eternity,' where 'day of eternity' is a synonym for 'eternity.' Here our author also has in mind the use of 'day' as 'Day of Judgement'; we might paraphrase, 'Unto that age which is ushered in by the Day of Judgement and continues for ever.'

Amen: omitted by the Vatican MS.

The oldest MSS. add the subscription 'of Peter II;' this is, of course, not part of the Epistle itself.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

1 THAT which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the

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i. 1–4. *Purpose in writing.*

I write to tell you what I learnt from my personal intimacy with Jesus of Nazareth, of the Eternal and Divine Word which was incarnate in him; in order that, sharing my knowledge, you may also share my fellowship with the Father and the Son; and that thus my heart may be made glad.

1–4. Note the absence of any personal greeting, or announcement of the writer's name. The Epistle is anonymous. Cf. Introduction, p. 71.

This introductory paragraph is modelled on the prologue to the fourth Gospel (John i. 1–18); cf. below.

1. That which: either the Son as eternal and incarnate, the neuter suggesting his superhuman majesty (cf. John iv. 22); or the truth concerning the nature and work of the Son, which was eternally true, but was revealed in the Incarnation; the latter view seems required by 'concerning.'

from the beginning. Cf. John i. 1, 2; Gen. i. 1.

we. The Epistle uses the first plural freely throughout. It is not the editorial 'we.' Elsewhere the author, the Apostle John[1], associates himself with his readers; here and in similar passages he speaks in the name of the apostles generally.

heard . . . seen . . . beheld . . . handled: in their intercourse with Jesus during his earthly life. 'Beheld' implies continuous and attentive observation. 'Handled' may refer to the incidents after the Resurrection, John xx. 27; Luke xxiv. 39.

concerning: A. V., 'of.'

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[1] See Introduction, p. 76.

Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have 2
seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life,
the eternal *life*, which was with the Father, and was
manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard 3
declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellow-
ship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father,
and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, 4
that our joy may be fulfilled.
And this is the message which we have heard from 5

the Word of life[1]. The analogy of John i. 1 suggests the interpretation 'the living, life-giving Word,' 'the Word, which is life,' i. e. Christ; so E. V. 'the Word.' On the other hand, the use of the almost identical phrase[2] in Phil. ii. 16, 'holding forth the word of life,' and the numerous similar phrases, 'word of the kingdom,' 'word of truth,' &c., suggest 'the gospel which reveals and bestows life'; so R. V. marg. There is little practical difference between the two views.

2. A parenthesis.

the life, the eternal life: A. V., 'that eternal life.' The life which Christ possesses, bestows, and maintains; almost equals 'Christ': cf. John i. 4, xi. 25.

which was with the Father. Cf. John i. 2.

3. we have seen. Note the threefold use of this phrase in verses 1-3, which furnish a good illustration of the characteristic Johannine method of ringing the changes on modifications and expansions of the same idea.

fellowship[3]. The 'having in common,' 'sharing,' 'collective participation[4]' in spiritual feelings, duties, and privileges. The verse suggests that fellowship with the Apostles is the condition of true fellowship with Christ.

4. our joy may be fulfilled: because the supreme joy of the Christian is that others should share his bliss. A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'your joy.'

i. 5-7. *Light and darkness.*

We were taught by Christ that God is absolute light. Hence the condition of true fellowship with God and the Church is that

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[1] τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς.
[2] λόγον ζωῆς.

[3] κοινωνία: only in this chapter in the Johannine books; elsewhere in the N.T. only Acts (once), Pauline Epistles (fourteen times), Hebrews (once).

[4] Findlay on 1 Cor. i. 9.

him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in
6 him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do
7 not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood
8 of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say

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we should walk in the light. Then and then only do we obtain forgiveness through Christ. Cf. John xii. 35, 36.

5. him: Jesus.

God is light. This equating of God or Christ to some abstract quality is characteristic of the Johannine writings; thus in this Epistle, God is also love, iv. 8, 16. In the Gospel, Christ is 'the resurrection and the life' (xi. 25), 'the truth and the life' (xiv. 6). Life, truth, light, are aspects or activities of the perfect nature of God. In the Gospel, Christ is 'the light of the world,' the manifestation of God to man (i. 4-9, iii. 19-21, viii. 12, xii. 35 f.). Cf. also Jas. i. 17. Philo[1] also says, 'First of all God is light.'

'Light' is a natural symbol for sincere benevolence, absolute truth, purity, and righteousness, and 'darkness' for the absence of these virtues, or for the presence of the opposite vices. Cf. ii. 9-11.

Here we first meet with the characteristic Johannine method of antithesis, 'light and darkness,' 'truth and falsehood' (verse 6), 'good and evil' (3 John 11), 'joy and sorrow' (John xvi. 20), 'life and death' (iii. 14), 'sin and righteousness' (iii. 7, 8), 'love and hatred' (iv. 19, 20), &c.

The reader should compare Isa. xlv. 7, 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.'

6. do not the truth: i. e. do not live according to the truth. The words render an O. T. phrase which means 'to be faithful to one's promises,' Gen. xxiv. 49. In the N. T. the phrase only occurs here and in John iii. 21.

7. we have fellowship one with another: i. e. Christians with fellow Christians, perhaps also with God. Fellowship, mutual knowledge and fellow feeling, is only possible between those who 'walk in the light'; see on verse 5.

cleanseth us from all sin: the sin into which those who 'walk in the light' still fall.

i. 8-10. *All are sinners.*

We need forgiveness; it is only by deliberate self-deception

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[1] *De Somniis*, i. 13, ap. Holtzmann.

that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and 9
righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, 10
we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye 2

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that we can persuade ourselves that we are free from sin. We cannot be forgiven unless we acknowledge that we are sinners. In denying this obvious fact, men not only deceive themselves, but also contradict God, and shew that they have not received the truth of the gospel.

8. If we say that we have no sin: i. e. that sin neither finds expression in our acts nor abides within us as a motive power; a tenet of some Gnostic heretics. It is a tempting but noxious fallacy to argue that because a Christian ought not to sin, therefore a true Christian does not sin.

8–10. the truth is not in us . . . his word is not in us. Such an error involves a lack of sincerity, and a low standard of moral and spiritual life, which shew that the truth, the word, the gospel, as a source of spiritual enlightenment, has not been fully received.

9. confess our sins: to God, and to man, at any rate so far as to acknowledge that we are sinners, Jas. v. 16.

faithful: to His promises, and therefore **righteous.**

10. we have not sinned: i.e. since conversion. This interpretation is required by verse 8 and the general context.

a liar. In view of inspired declarations of the universality of sin, e. g. Ps. xiv; John xv. 2.

ii. 1, 2. *Christ our advocate.*

I write this to help you to avoid sin. Yet, as I have said, experience shews that even Christians fall into sin; but the atonement by which Christ obtained forgiveness for the whole world makes him a successful advocate with God on behalf of those who believe on Him.

1. little children[1]: a favourite term in this Epistle; only elsewhere in the N. T. in John xiii. 33; Gal. iv. 19.

that ye may not sin. Nothing leads men more readily into sin than the belief that they are free from sin; but frank recognition and acknowledgement of wrong-doing help them to resist sin. The Greek phrase does not merely mean 'that ye may not be in the habit of sinning,' but almost 'that ye may on no occasion

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[1] *τεκνία.*

may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate
2 with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is
the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but
3 also for the whole world. And hereby know we that we
4 know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith,

fall into sin.' This is the ideal standard at which every Christian should aim.

if any man sin. The context, especially the next verse, shews that 'any Christian' is meant; and the Greek implies that such an occurrence is a normal possibility in the life of a Christian, which is never perfectly a Christian life.

Advocate (*paraklētos*): elsewhere in the N. T. only in John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7 (which see); R. V. marg. 'Comforter,' or 'Helper.' It is used in these passages as a title of the Holy Spirit, who is often spoken of in later Christian literature as 'the Paraclete.' John xiv. 16, 'He shall give you another Comforter,' implies that *paraklētos* is also a title of our Lord. R. V. marg. has here 'Comforter' or 'Helper'; but the word is clearly used here in its usual classical sense of 'advocate.'

righteous: therefore qualified to intercede for the unrighteous.

2. propitiation[1]: that which induces any one to be gracious and kindly; here the work of Christ, through which God forgives sinners. Cf. Rom. iii. 24-26.

ii. 3-6. *A consistent life shews that we are 'in Christ.'*

But the possibility of forgiveness should not encourage us to sin. Obedience is the proof that we know and love Christ. Professions to know him are false, when they are made by those who do not obey him. If we are 'in Christ,' we shall follow his example.

3-6. The relation of this paragraph to the preceding is obvious. A Christian may be overcome by temptation, or may fall into occasional sin through carelessness and lack of moral discernment; but he will not live in habitual and deliberate sin. These verses give a practical interpretation of i. 5-7.

3. know[2] **him:** know God's truth and have experience of fellowship with Him. Thus Westcott, 'To know God as God is to be in vital fellowship with him, to love Him, to fulfil that relation towards Him for which we are born.'

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[1] ἱλασμός: in the N. T. only here and in iv. 10.

[2] ἐγνώκαμεν: perhaps with reference to the claims which the Gnostics made to a special knowledge of God.

I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a
liar, and the truth is not in him: but whoso keepeth his 5
word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected.
Hereby know we that we are in him: he that saith he 6
abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he
walked.

Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but 7
an old commandment which ye had from the beginning:
the old commandment is the word which ye heard.
Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which 8

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4. Cf. i. 6, 8, iv. 20.

5. his word: not merely 'his commandments,' but all to which Christian teaching prompts the loyal follower of Christ.

hath . . . been perfected: has attained its full growth, become mature. Notice how verses 3 and 4 illustrate our author's habit of repeating a statement with some slight differences, here in a somewhat stronger form. In verse 3 keeping commandments shews knowledge; here, keeping the word shews love. Cf. iv. 12, 13; John xiv. 21, 23.

the love of God: the Christian's love towards God.

5, 6. are in him . . . abideth in him. This figure is most simply expanded by comparing the influence, spirit, and presence of God to an atmosphere which is the constant 'environment' and the determining condition of the Christian life. Cf. Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.' John often speaks of 'being' or 'abiding' 'in God' and 'in him,' 'him' being sometimes clearly God the Father, sometimes perhaps used with intentional ambiguity, so that it may be understood either of God or Christ. John never uses Paul's favourite phrases, 'In Christ,' 'In Christ Jesus.'

ii. 7-11. *The new-old commandment.*

The example of Christ teaches us one special lesson, summed up in a commandment as old as Christianity and yet always new, the commandment that Christians should love one another. This is what is meant by 'walking in the light.'

7. Beloved: A. V., 'brethren,' following inferior MSS.

7, 8. no new commandment . . . an old commandment . . . a new commandment. The reference is not to what precedes, but to the duty of loving the brethren, enforced in the following verses, and in iii. 10, 14-24, iv. 7—v. 2. The Apostle refers to our Lord's words, John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment I give

thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness
9 is passing away, and the true light already shineth. He
that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in
10 the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother
abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stum-

unto you, that ye love one another.' This commandment was in a sense old when the Epistle was written some fifty or sixty years after the death of Christ; and yet it was then, and always will be, new, constantly unfolding a new and fuller meaning, and coming to men as a new revelation of duty. Love towards all fellow Christians as Christians, even when they differ from us in doctrine, ritual, church organization, and discipline, is a duty which, even to-day, the church seldom ventures to preach, and rarely attempts to practice. Cf. 2 John 5.

from the beginning: of Christianity. The command to love Christians could not very well be older; cf. ii. 24, iii. 11; 2 John 5, 6. This 'new commandment' is an adaptation to new conditions of Lev. xix. 18, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

which thing is true in him and in you: 'him' is God or Christ. The meaning of the clause is quite uncertain. It has been variously explained, thus: (i) The law of love is valid both in God and the Christian; (ii) The fact that the commandment is new, is true of God as having given it afresh and in a new form through Christ, and ever renewing it through the Spirit; and therefore also of man as ever receiving it as new.

because. The uncertainty as to the previous clause makes the connexion indicated by this word uncertain.

the darkness . . . the true light. The sin, misery, and ignorance of the old dispensation . . . the teaching, influence, spirit, and salvation of Christ (John i. 4-9, viii. 12; Rom. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 5).

is passing away . . . already: A.V., less accurately, 'is past,' 'now.'

the true light. Cf. John i. 9. 'True' = 'real,' 'genuine [1].'

9. brother: fellow Christian, iii. 13, 14, and generally in the N. T. He who has come to love a Christian as Christian will find that this also involves loving men as men [2]. Cf. iii. 14, 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

10. Cf. John xi. 9, 10.

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[1] ἀληθινός, a favourite term in John, Hebrews, 1 John, and Revelation. Only twice elsewhere in the N. T.

[2] Cf. Westcott on this verse.

bling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the 11
darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not
whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his
eyes.

I write unto you, *my* little children, because your sins 12
are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, 13
fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning.
I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome
the evil one. I have written unto you, little children,

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11. Cf. John xii. 35.

ii. 12-14. *To children, young men, fathers.*

In sending you these admonitions, I feel that I have a right to appeal to you with confidence, because you are children of God, whom He has forgiven, elders with ripe experience, young men whose spiritual energy has already won victories over the evil one.

12-14. Here the Apostle repeats not merely a sentence (see on i. 3), but a short paragraph with variations.

12. my **little children**[1]**:** an affectionate term for believers generally, cf. ii. 1, 28, iii. 7; for 'children' in the same sense, iii. 1, 2.

your sins are forgiven: an initial experience of the Christian life.

for his name's sake: for the sake of what Christ is and has done.

13. fathers, because ye know, &c.: men of years, knowledge, and experience.

him which is from the beginning: Christ, as in i. 1 (which see).

young men: because ye have overcome the evil one. The younger men, specially exposed to conflict and temptation, are encouraged by being reminded of the moral and spiritual victories with which their Christian life had begun.

I have written[2]**:** probably to be understood as almost synonymous with 'I write,' according to the Greek idiom[3] by which 'The writer of a letter sometimes puts himself in the place of his reader, and describes as past that which is to himself present, but which will be past to his reader[4].' The 'I write,' 'I have

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[1] *τεκνία.* [2] *ἔγραψα.* [3] Epistolary aorist.

[4] Burton, *N.T. Words and Tenses*, p. 21. R. V. marg. 'I wrote' suggests another view, a reference to a previous letter, or to the gospel.

14 because ye know the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him which is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye
15 have overcome the evil one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the
16 world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but

written,' might be paraphrased, 'Whether I look at these matters from my point of view as writer, or from yours as readers.' Here also the A.V. has 'I write' with inferior MS.

little children: a different word[1] from that in verse 12, but used similarly for believers generally; Westcott, 'little ones,' as subordinate.

because ye know the Father. All Christians had an experience of God, though only the more mature knew Christ as 'him which is from the beginning.' Christian life begins with a sense of relationship to the Father through Christ; later on the consecrated intellect has leisure to meditate on the Eternal Sonship.

14. young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you. The added clauses remind them of the resources to which they owed the victories they had already won, and must look for future success.

ii. 15-17. *The world and the Father.*

If you are to abide in strength and knowledge, your love must be wholly given to God and withdrawn from the transient world of evil self-indulgence, which is always and altogether hostile to Him.

15. Love not the world. For 'world' see on Jas. i. 27. Using 'world' in a general sense, John could say, 'God loved the world' (John iii. 16).

If any man love the world, &c. Cf. Matt. vi. 24; Jas. iv. 4.

16. lust. See on Jas. i. 14.

lust of the flesh: gross and excessive sensual appetites, impurity, gluttony, drunkenness, &c. Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 11.

lust of the eyes. This phrase only occurs here, and no

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[1] παιδία.

is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the 17
lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth
for ever.

Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard 18
that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many

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certain and exact parallel to it is quoted. As 'lust of the flesh' is sinful desire excited by excessive and morbid cravings of the body, and perhaps the unredeemed nature generally, 'lust of the eyes' will be sinful desire excited by the sight of attractive objects, including all forms of covetousness: cf. the Tenth Commandment. Westcott writes somewhat differently: 'The "wants" which man feels can be divided into two great classes. Some things he desires to appropriate personally; some things he desires to enjoy without appropriation. The desire of the flesh embraces the one class (e.g. gratification of appetites); the desire of the eyes the other (e.g. pursuit of art as an end).'

the vainglory of life. 'Vainglory,' A. V. 'Pride[1],' ostentatious and insolent display of 'life[2],' i.e. means of living, position in life, worldly advantages; and the enjoyment of such display. The two 'lusts,' on the one hand, and 'the pride of life,' on the other, express the attitude of the worldly man respectively to what he wants, and to what he has already got.

17. the world passeth away. Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

ii. 18, 19. *The antichrists.*

You have not long to struggle, for the appointed sign of the approaching end of the present dispensation has appeared in the shape of false teachers arising in the church, and betraying their disloyalty by separating themselves from us.

18. it is the last hour. See on Jas. v. 3, 7, and cf. Heb. i. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 7.

as ye heard that antichrist cometh. The term 'antichrist' occurs here, ii. 22, iv. 3; 2 John 7, and not elsewhere in the N.T. Antichrist is 'one who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ[3],' a development of the pseudo-Christ of Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22. 'Ye heard' refers to apostolic teaching, which is also illustrated by Matt. xxiv. 5, 24; John v. 43; Acts xx. 30; 2 Thess. ii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1. The Jewish apocalyptic literature taught that the establishment of the Messianic kingdom would be preceded by a period of great distress and spiritual corruption (Dan. vii. 7, &c.), in which evil potentates would arise as champions of sin against God.

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[1] ἀλαζονεία.

[2] βίος, R.V. 'living' in Luke xv. 12.

[3] Westcott.

antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour.
19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if
they had been of us, they would have continued with us:
but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest how
20 that they all are not of us. And ye have an anointing
21 from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not

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many antichrists: teachers who used the name and authority of Christ in support of practices and opinions contrary to his teaching. It is not clear whether 'antichrist' is a great personal champion of evil, of whom the many are forerunners; or the personification of the spirit by which they are inspired: cf. 2 John 7.

whereby we know. The appearance of such false teachers is a sign that a great spiritual movement has lost something of its original force and purity, and needs renewal.

19. They went out from us. They arose within the church, had had Christian training; and, at any rate externally, had lived the Christian life. They came from the church; but, from what follows, they seem to have severed themselves from the church, or from the fellowship of John and his followers. Such schismatic sects arose towards the close of the first century: cf. Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15, 20.

they were not of us, &c.: they had never been Christians at heart, else they would have wished to remain in fellowship with the Apostle: cf. John vi. 37, x. 28, 29.

that they might be made manifest. While they remained in the church, it was not easy to distinguish them in every case from other teachers: cf. 1 Cor. xi. 19.

that they all are not of us: R.V. marg., 'that not all are of us,' i. e. that not all those who are externally connected with the church are really Christians. The A.V., 'that they were not all of us,' gives an impossible sense; it implies that *some* of these 'antichrists' *were* 'of us.'

ii. 20–23. *How the antichrist is known.*

But I am confident that you will not be led astray, because you are taught of the Holy Spirit; you will know that the teaching of these men, the denial that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, is false, and shews that they have no true knowledge of God.

20. ye have an anointing (*chrisma*), and therefore are in fellowship with *Christ*, *the* Anointed One; are true *Christians*; and have nothing in common with *antichrist*. The *chrisma* is the sacred anointing oil, here used as a figure for the Holy Spirit. Cf. Zech. iv.

the Holy One: either Christ (Mark i. 24; Acts iii. 14, &c.)

written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth.
Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? 22
This is the antichrist, *even* he that denieth the Father
and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same 23
hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath

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or the Father (2 Cor. i. 21, 'He that . . . anointed us, is God'; Heb. i. 9).

know all things. So the Alexandrine MS. and the Codex Ephremi. Cf. verse 27; John xiv. 26, xvi. 13; and Jude 5. Westcott explains: 'Ye have potentially complete and certain knowledge: no false teaching can deceive you, if ye are faithful to yourselves.' But the two oldest manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, have 'ye all know,' i. e. 'know the truth.'

21. no lie is of the truth. Those who knew the truth would recognize its opposite, and would discern the true character of the false teachers: cf. iii. 19 and John viii. 44.

22. the liar . . . the antichrist: not as the A. V., 'a liar,' 'antichrist.'

he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews denied this; but this verse refers not to them, but to those who professed to be Christian teachers. Such teachers anticipated later Gnostics, who denied that the Christ ever really became incarnate; Jesus, according to them, was not the Christ, but was merely possessed for a while by an 'æon' or Divine emanation. There was no union of the human and the Divine. Other Gnostics repudiated the O. T., and denied that the Christian Saviour was the Jewish Messiah. Cf. iv. 3; 2 John 7.

23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Without a Son, God would not be Father, and we should have no revelation of His Fatherhood. John xv. 23; 2 John 9.

he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. The corresponding words in the A.V. are in italics, probably because the Greek clause translated by them had been omitted in the late manuscripts on which the translators mainly relied; but the testimony of the early manuscripts, &c., shew that they were a part of the original text. It was accidentally omitted because it had the same ending, 'hath the Father,' as the previous clause[1]. Cf. iv. 15; John xiv. 7–10. Confesseth, from heart-felt conviction.

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[1] 'Also' is not at the end in the Greek.

24 the Father also. As for you, let that abide in you
which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye
heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall
25 abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the
promise which he promised us, *even* the life eternal.
26 These things have I written unto you concerning them
27 that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye
need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing
teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is

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ii. 24-29. *The teaching of the Spirit.*

Hold fast to the teaching, to the promise of eternal life, which you received when you became Christians. Indeed, I have not written because I doubted either your loyalty or your discernment, but to warn you to exercise that discernment to test the false teachers. An intelligent loyalty will prepare you to meet your Master, and a holy life will establish your right to be called sons of God.

24. As for you: in contrast to the false teachers.

that . . . which ye heard from the beginning. See on verse 7. After 'that' the A. V. adds 'therefore,' with inferior MSS. Cf. John xv. 7.

25. he: Christ.

promised us. John iii. 15, &c. Some ancient authorities have 'you.'

life eternal. Cf. John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ'; see also on i. 2.

27. anointing. See on verse 20.

ye need not that any one teach you, &c. Cf. John xvi. 13; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Why then should the Apostle write to them? To confirm them against the false teachers by his authority, and to remind them that they needed no fresh teaching, but only to hold fast to what they knew, and seek the guidance of the Spirit in applying familiar truths to new circumstances.

his[1] anointing. A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'the same[2] anointing.'

as his anointing teacheth . . . and is true. R. V. marg., 'so it is true.' The exact reading and translation are a little uncertain, but the general sense is clear. The passage asserts

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[1] *αὐτοῦ.* [2] *αὐτό.*

no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him. And 28
now, *my* little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be
manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed
before him at his coming. If ye know that he is 29
righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth
righteousness is begotten of him.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed 3
upon us, that we should be called children of God: and
such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not,
because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children 2

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that the readers may obtain true guidance from the indwelling Spirit.

ye abide in him. R. V. marg., 'abide ye.' The Greek word is ambiguous, and may have either meaning.

28. if he shall be manifested. The A. V., 'when he shall appear,' is a literal rendering of a reading found in inferior MSS.; but it also gives the sense of the true reading better than the R.V. The Apostle does not mean to imply any doubt as to the certainty, but only as to the time and circumstances of the manifestation—'If the time of Christ's manifestation should arrive.'

coming: *parousia.* See Jas. v. 7.

29. ye know. R. V. marg., 'know ye': cf. on verse 27. They might know that the children of God would resemble their Father, and thus they might test both themselves and the false teachers. Cf. iii. 7, 10.

iii. 1-3. *The children of God.*

For the Divine Father, in His great love, has not only called us His children, but also made our sonship a reality. Hence men who live to themselves and not to God are as little able to understand us as they are to understand Him. But to us our present sonship is an earnest of closer likeness to Christ in the day when 'we shall see him as he is.' This great hope encourages us to strive now after that holy life, to which we are finally to attain.

1. the Father . . . children of God. God is 'Father' not only in relation to Christ, but also to Christ's people. Cf. on John i. 14.

and such **we are.** Omitted by the A. V. with inferior MSS. Cf. John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14-19; Gal. iv. 5-9.

the world. See on Jas. i. 27.

because it knew him not. 'Him' is God revealed in Christ: cf. John xv. 18, 19, xvii. 25.

of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall
3 be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope *set* on him purifieth him-
4 self, even as he is pure. Every one that doeth sin doeth
5 also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness. And ye know

---

2. it is not yet made manifest what we shall be . . . we shall be like him. At first sight it might seem that, in becoming 'children of God,' the readers had attained the highest pitch of perfection and blessedness. But Isa. lvi. 5 speaks of 'a name better than of sons and of daughters.' The Apostle's readers were indeed 'children of God,' but by no means perfect in filial love and obedience. There is therefore prospect and promise of a sonship like that of the 'only begotten Son of God,' which shall realize the ideal of the relationship of a son to the Father: cf. Rom. viii. 29; Phil. iii. 21.

We know. A. V., 'but we know,' with inferior MSS.

if he shall be manifested. R. V. marg., if 'it' shall be manifested. The subject is not expressed in the Greek, so that, apart from the context, we may translate either 'he' or 'it.' '*He*' is supported by ii. 28 (which see), where the same phrase occurs, and the subject is clearly 'he'; and also by the general context: 'he' gives a sense required by the following, 'we shall see *him*.' Although 'it' is suggested by the previous phrase '*it* is not yet made manifest,' 'it' gives a very poor sense.

we shall see him even as he is. Cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Col. iii. 3, 4.

3. that hath this hope set **on him.** It is no vain imagination suggested by man's own desires, but is bestowed upon him by God.

purifieth . . . pure. See on Jas. iii. 17.

he[1]**:** Christ, a specially emphatic term in the Greek, for which we have no equivalent.

iii. 4–8. *The Christian does not live in sin.*

You know what a holy life is; let no sophistry induce you to juggle with your consciences, or to believe that what conscience condemns is consistent with loyalty to Christ. Hold fast to your knowledge of the contrast between right and wrong, between Christ and Satan.

4. sin is lawlessness. The A. V., 'sin is the transgression of the law,' is misleading; it suggests that the clause is a definition of sin, whereas the Apostle means that sin, which some false

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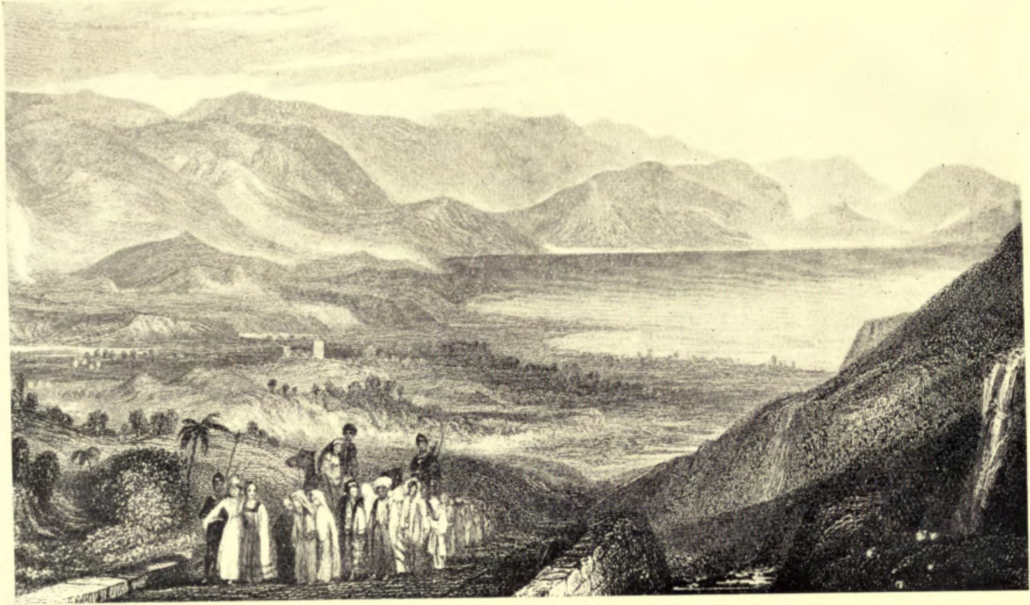
[1] ἐκεῖνος.



Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

THE DEAD SEA, JERICHO, AND THE MOUTH OF THE JORDAN

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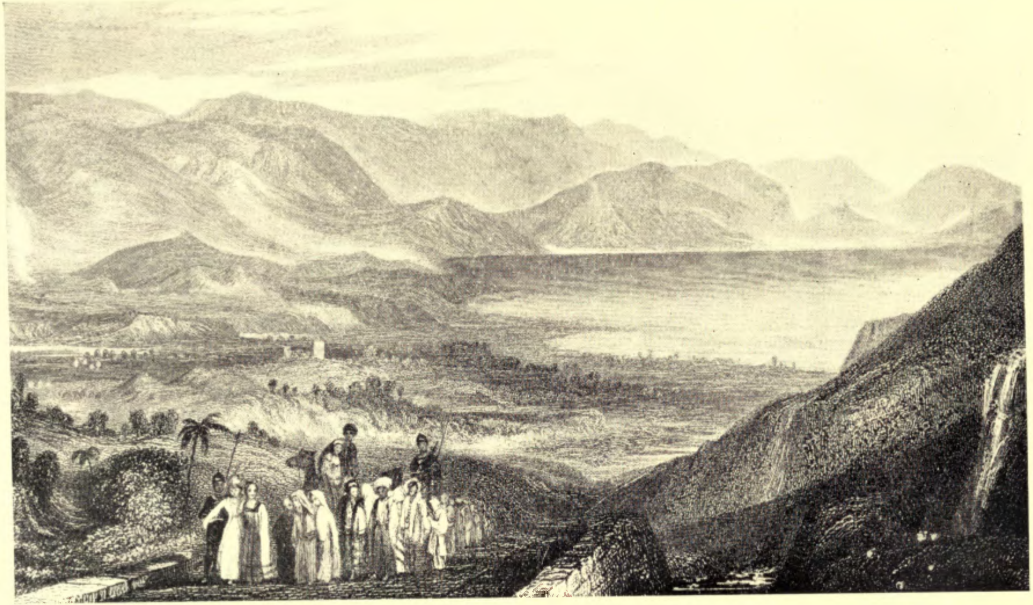

Drawing by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

THE DEAD SEA, JERICHO, AND THE MOUTH OF THE JORDAN

that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is
no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whoso- 6
ever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him.
My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that 7
doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous:
he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth 8
from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God
manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.
Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his 9

teachers maintained was consistent with obedience to Christ, was invariably a breach of his law. A state of sin involved defiant rebellion against him. Occasionally it has been maintained that sin was a matter of indifference to the believer who was one with Christ; but the danger indicated here more often takes the form of an attempt to persuade oneself that particular sins are justifiable. Cf. v. 17; Rom. iv. 15.

5. to take away. R. V. marg., less probably, 'to bear.' Cf. John i. 29.

sins. A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'our sins.'

in him is no sin. Cf. 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15.

6. sinneth: habitually, lives a life surrendered to sin. Cf. ii. 4; 3 John 11.

knoweth. R. V. marg. 'hath known.'

7. ***My*** **little children.** The '*My*' of the R. V. indicates that the phrase translates a different Greek word[1] from that[2] rendered 'little children,' which latter, the less affectionate of the two, is read here by the A. V., with some ancient authorities.

he that doeth righteousness, &c. Cf. ii. 29.

8. he that doeth sin is of the devil. Cf. verse 10; John viii. 44; Acts xiii. 10. The influences which control his life emanate from the powers of evil.

from the beginning: of history in Gen. iii.

that he might destroy the works of the devil. Cf. Heb. ii. 14.

iii. 9-12. *Mutual love the mark of the children of God.*

Your conduct will shew whether you are children of God, or of the devil. The infallible token of righteousness is love for the brethren; on the other hand, hatred shews that righteousness is absent, as in the case of Cain.

9. is begotten. The Greek implies 'has been made and remains a child of God.' Cf. v. 18.

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[1] *τεκνία.*

[2] *παιδία.*

seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is
10 begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not
11 his brother. For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another:
12 not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13, 14 Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because

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his seed abideth in him. The Divine life remains and is active, grows, and prevails more and more. Cf. 1 Pet. i. 23.

doeth no sin . . . cannot sin. So far as a man lives, as a child of God, according to the Divine life given him in Christ. Sin is due to the dying life of 'the old Adam,' which is only gradually eradicated.

10. he that loveth . . . his brother. A crucial test of righteousness, which, however, is often evaded. 'To love any one as a Christian' sometimes comes to mean 'to cherish ill will.'

11. the message. Cf. i. 5, ii. 7.

12. Cain. Cf. Heb. xi. 4; Jude 11.

of the evil one: though he was the first-born of parents who were the immediate creation of God. Physical and spiritual ancestry are quite distinct. Cf. verse 8.

his works were evil. This is clearly implied by the narrative in Genesis; but it is no longer possible to determine in what, according to that narrative, the evil of Cain's works, or the righteousness of Abel's, consisted.

iii. 13–18. *Love and hatred.*

Hence it is natural that the unrighteous world should hate you. But, within the church, the mutual love of the brethren shews that they have entered into the new life of Christ, just as hatred is a token of spiritual death. Hatred would fain rob its enemy of life, but love lays down life for the brethren, after the example of Christ. How much more then shall we make some sacrifice to relieve poverty and distress? True love is shewn by deeds, and not merely by words.

13. the world hateth you. Cf. John xv. 18, 19, xvii. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

14. We know, &c. Cf. ii. 9–11.

we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in
death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: 15
and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding
in him. Hereby know we love, because he laid down 16
his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the
brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and be- 17
holdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his com-
passion from him, how doth the love of God abide in
him? *My* little children, let us not love in word, neither 18
with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall 19

He that loveth not. A. V. adds 'his brother,' with some ancient authorities. The Christian would associate chiefly with brethren, and temptations to envy and malice would arise out of such intercourse; successful resistance to such temptations would prove the indwelling of the Divine life, which would lead to love of mankind as well as of the brethren.

15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. Cf. Matt. v. 21, 22.

no murderer hath eternal life. Cf. Gal. v. 21; Rev. xxi. 8.

16. Hereby know we love. Christ's sacrifice of himself is at once a revelation of perfect love, the love of God, and a standard for human love. Cf. John iii. 16.

17. the world's goods. The necessaries, comforts, and luxuries of material life. The word[1] translated 'goods' is rendered 'living' in the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke xv. 12: 'He divided unto them his living.' Cf. ii. 16.

beholdeth: looks on unconcerned, or even with curious interest.

18. let us not love in word, neither with the tongue. Not merely with words that come only from the lips outward.

iii. 19-24. *How we may know that we are in Him.*

The consciousness of genuine love assures us that our lives are surrendered to the truth of the gospel; and, in spite of our consciousness of sin, enables us to rest in confident trust on the infinite resources of God's power and wisdom. But a good conscience, due to loyal obedience, enables us to lay our needs boldly before God, and to believe that He will satisfy them. His law is summed up in faith in Christ and love to man. The proof

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[1] *βίος.*

we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart
20 before him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because
God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness

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that we are in Christ, and he in us, lies in our obedience, and in our possessing his spirit.

19–21. The connexion of thought in these verses is very obscure and is matter of much controversy, into which we have not space to enter. Only the most probable interpretations are given.

19. Hereby. In the 'love . . . in deed and truth' inculcated in the previous paragraph, cf. verse 14. Some scholars[1], however, refer it to the power and knowledge of God mentioned in verse 20. According to the latter view, our assurance of salvation rests on God's 'efficacious grace,' an idea that does not spring naturally from the context.

shall we know. A. V., with some ancient versions, 'we know.'

we are of the truth. Our life is inspired by truth, especially by Christ who is the truth.

19, 20. shall assure (*lit.* 'persuade') **our heart before him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us.** Our hearts are distressed by the consciousness of sin, but this distress will be done away with, our hearts will be assured of forgiveness. If the literal rendering 'persuade' is taken, the context does not readily suggest what it is we are persuaded of. A. V. puts a full stop at 'him,' and begins a new sentence, 'For if our heart condemn us'; a rendering due to the omission, with some ancient authorities, of 'because' after 'condemn us.'

because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. God's infinite power and knowledge assure us that His loving purposes will not be baffled by the waywardness of our hearts. The verse refers to Christians whose efforts after righteousness are hampered by their continued frailty. Cf. ii. 1, 2; the idea is the complement of that in 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

21. if our heart condemn us not. The thought of God's mercy and power reassures the penitent sinner, but the consciousness of growth in righteousness emboldens the believer in his fellowship with Him.

'To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!
But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can shew.'

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[1] Holtzmann, &c.

toward God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, 22
because we keep his commandments, and do the things
that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his command- 23
ment, that we should believe in the name of his Son
Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us
commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments 24
abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know
that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, 4

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22. we receive of him, because we keep his commandments. Obedience harmonizes our lives with God's purpose and methods, and we receive the blessings which spring from such harmony. Cf. v. 14; Mark xi. 24; John ix. 31, xiv. 13, xv. 7, xvi. 23, 24.

23. Cf. ii. 7, 8; John vi. 29.

24. hereby. Ambiguous, as in verse 19; it probably refers, as there, to the mutual love previously mentioned as the 'commandment'; what we thus know is that God abides in us through the Spirit. Others refer 'hereby' to the gift of the Spirit. The fact that we have received the Spirit enables us to know that God abides in us, i. e. the spiritual impulses of the Christian life to prayer, &c., assure us of the indwelling Divine presence. Cf. John xiv. 23, xv. 10; Rom. viii. 9.

iv. 1-6. *The false prophets.*

Not all who claim to speak by the Spirit are to be accepted; there are false prophets, apostates who have left the church for the world. The teacher who is inspired by the true Spirit may be known by the token that he teaches, that Jesus is both the Christ and true man; the true believer may be known by the fact that he is in fellowship with the Apostolic Church, verses 2, 6. For the false prophets deny the reality of the Incarnation, in the spirit of antichrist. You have defeated their attempt to dominate the church, and they have turned to the world, to which they properly belong.

1. prove the spirits: i. e. test the claims of those who profess to be inspired teachers; they may indeed have an inspiration, but it may be from Satan. The *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*[1], ch. xi, says, 'Not every one that speaketh in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord;' and gives as the marks of the false prophet doctrines differing from those of the

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[1] Cf. p. 17.

whether they are of God: because many false prophets
2 are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit
of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ
3 is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which
confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the *spirit*
of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh;
4 and now it is in the world already. Ye are of God, *my*
little children, and have overcome them: because greater
5 is he that is in you than he that is in the world. They

Teaching—requests for money and exorbitant demands for hospitality. Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 10; Rev. ii. 2.

false prophets. Cf. ii. 18; Matt. xxiv. 24; Acts xx. 30; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 2 John 7.

gone out: from the church.

into the world: in the limited and special sense of society outside the church, opposed to God and His people.

2. Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. An alternative reading, strongly supported, would give the rendering, 'confesseth Jesus, as Christ, come in the flesh.' The current false teaching, against which it was specially needful to protest, was a form of Docetism (Christ only *seemingly* incarnate), which denied that Christ became man, and asserted that he only assumed for a season the human body of Jesus. Cf. v. 1.

3. confesseth not Jesus. The Latin versions and Fathers read, for 'confesseth not,' a word[1] which R.V. marg. renders 'annulleth,' and Westcott explains, 'separates the divine from the human, divides the one divine-human Person.' A. V., with some ancient authorities, reads 'that Jesus is come in the flesh,' which is certainly the meaning.

this. The spirit which denies the Incarnation.

antichrist. Cf. ii. 18, 22.

ye have heard that it cometh. Cf. ii. 18; 2 Thess. ii. 7.

it is in the world. Here, as throughout the passage, 'world' is the world of evil men. Cf. verse 1.

4. have overcome them: i. e. the false teachers. The faithful believers, apparently, had successfully resisted their attempts to win the church to their errors. Cf. v. 4.

he that is in you. The Spirit of God or Christ.

he that is in the world. The spirit of Satan or antichrist. Cf. John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 12; Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12.

5. Cf. John iii. 31, xv. 19, xvii. 14.

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[1] λύει.

are of the world: therefore speak they *as* of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that 6
knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; 7
and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; 8
for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested 9
in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, 10

5, 6. the world heareth them . . . he that knoweth God heareth us. There was open opposition between 'them,' the false teachers, and 'us,' the true disciples of the apostles; and the true believer is known by his fellowship with 'us.' Cf. John viii. 47, x. 27; 2 Cor. x. 7.

6. the spirit of truth. Cf. John xiv. 17.

iv. 7–10. *Love, the token of sonship.*

But correct doctrine and church membership are only external signs; the essential characteristic of true religion is love. He that loveth is a child of God, and knows Him as only His children can; for God is love, and the source of love. He has shewn His love by sending His Son into an evil world to make atonement for its sins, and has thus called forth our love towards Himself.

7. that loveth: is in the habit of loving; has love for the guiding principle and ruling force of his life.

begotten of God. Cf. iii. 9.

8. knoweth not. More literally, 'knew not,' never attained to any real knowledge of God; 'has not known God.' Cf. iii. 6.

God is love. Cf. verse 16 and i. 5.

9. in us. R. V. marg., 'in our case.'

only begotten[1]. Only elsewhere of Christ in N. T., John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18; Paul (Rom. viii. 29, &c.; cf. Heb. i. 6; Rev. i. 5) speaks of Christ as 'first-born[2].' Cf. iii. 16; Rom. v. 8, viii. 32.

into the world. As before, the world of evil, alienated from and hostile to God.

that we might live through him. Cf. v. 11.

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[1] μονογενῆ.

[2] πρωτότοκος.

not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his
11 Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God
12 so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man
hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another,
God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us:
13 hereby know we that we abide in him, and he in us,
14 because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have
beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the
15 Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall
confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in

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10. not that we loved God, but that he loved us. God's love was not suggested by any love on our part towards Him, but was original and spontaneous, the source of all other love. Cf. verses 19, 20; John xv. 16.

propitiation. See on ii. 2.

iv. 11–16. *Signs that we are in Him.*

Moreover, God's love, thus shewn, is the ideal to which we should strive to attain in our love to one another. Our mutual love assures us of the presence within us of the invisible God, whom we have seen manifested in Jesus. God abides in those who recognize that Jesus is the Son of God.

11. Cf. John xv. 12.

12. No man hath beheld God. Cf. John i. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 16. In the light of verse 20, the connexion seems to be that the most immediate outlet for love towards an invisible God will be His earthly children[1]. Cf. Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

his love is perfected. Cf. ii. 5. 'His love' may mean 'love to Him,' or 'love inspired by Him.'

13. because he hath given us of his Spirit. A fact shewn by mutual love, cf. iii. 24.

14. we have beheld and bear witness. Cf. i. 1, 2; John i. 14.

the Saviour of the world. Cf. John iii. 17.

15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God. Cf. v. 5. Parallel to verse 2, ii. 22, 23, v. 1, but more distinctly emphasizing the Divine nature of Christ. God, whom no man hath seen, must be known through the Incarnation; and those who fail to recognize God in Jesus cannot know Him. Cf. Rom. x. 9.

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[1] So Holtzmann.

him, and he in God. And we know and have believed 16
the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he
that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in
him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may 17
have boldness in the day of judgement; because as he
is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in 18
love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath
punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in
love. We love, because he first loved us. If a man say, 19, 20

16. in us. R. V. marg., 'in our case.'

God is love. Also in verse 8.

abideth in God. So ii. 6, 28.

God abideth in him. So verse 12; the two 'abidings' are also combined in iii. 24.

iv. 17-21. *Love to God and man casts out fear.*
As regards the future, we can await the Day of Judgement in confidence, because we share with Christ and his church mutual love to one another, and a common hostility to the world of evil. This love, whose source is God, delivers us from all fear of punishment, and is the only true love. For, according to the express word of Christ, he who does not love his brother, and yet professes to love God, is a liar.

17. love made perfect with us: i. e. on our part, as A. V. 'our love.'

boldness in the day of judgement. Cf. ii. 28, iii. 19-21.

as he is, even so are we in this world. They share alike Christ's attitude towards the world of evil, his separation from its corruption, and the hatred of the world towards him. Cf. iii. 13, iv. 1.

18. fear hath punishment[1]. The context requires some such statement as, 'Fear springs from the consciousness that punishment is deserved, and from the expectation that it will be inflicted;' probably this is the general sense of the clause, although 'fear hath punishment' does not seem quite equivalent to this. Of course fear is in itself a form of suffering, and, when it arises from anticipated chastisement, is a foretaste of retribution. But this hardly seems to be the meaning of the Greek, neither does it suit the context. The words are somewhat obscure.

19. We love. Some authorities add 'Him' or 'God'; but the following verse requires the general statement.

because he first loved us. Cf. verse 10.

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[1] *κόλασις*, in the N. T., only here and in Matt. xxv. 46.

I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he
that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot
21 love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment
have we from him, that he who loveth God love
his brother also.

5 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten
of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat
2 loveth him also that is begotten of him. Hereby we
know that we love the children of God, when we love
3 God, and do his commandments. For this is the love of

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20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. Our love to God, being inspired by God's love to us (verses 10, 19), cannot exist side by side with hatred of our fellow Christians. Cf. ii. 4, iii. 17.

he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, &c. Cf. verse 12.

cannot love. According to some ancient authorities, 'How can he love?'

21. this commandment. Cf. iii. 23.

his brother also. Love for the brother is the test of the profession of love to God; but the profession comes first, is the feature which the brethren have in common. If the profession is real, the common love to God, which draws the brethren together, will lead them *also* to love one another.

v. 1–5. *Love, obedience, and faith, signs of sonship.*

We know that we are the children of God when we recognize our elder brother, i. e. when we believe that Jesus is the Christ. If we love the Son, we shall love and obey the Father; and thus we shall know that we love His children. Obedience is not hard; for those who recognize Jesus as the Son of God have a faith which can overcome the world of evil.

1. Cf. iv. 2, 7; John i. 12, 13, xiv. 1, 9, 10, xv. 23.

2. we know that we love the children of God, when we love God (so far the converse of iv. 20), **and do his commandments.** The last two clauses form a single compound statement: 'if we love God, so as to obey Him.' As He wills the highest welfare of the brethren, such obedience will ensure both kindly feeling, and the wisest and most beneficent behaviour towards them. We shall be sure of loving them in the very best way.

do. A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'keep.'

3. Cf. ii. 5; Matt. xi. 30, and the next verse.

God, that we keep his commandments: and his com-
mandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is be- 4
gotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the
victory that hath overcome the world, *even* our faith.
And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that 5
believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that 6
came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not with
the water only, but with the water and with the blood.
And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the 7

4. For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world. God's demands are not unduly exacting, because He supplies the grace wherein we may satisfy them; may resist temptation; and may overcome the influences that try to hinder us. Cf. iv. 4; John xvi. 33.

our faith. The devotion and trust which the believer feels towards God. 'Faith' only occurs here in this Epistle.

5. Cf. iv. 15, v. 1.

v. 6–12. *The three witnesses.*

Jesus is the Christ who came by the water of baptism and the blood of the Passion; as to whom the Spirit, the water, and the blood unite in a threefold testimony; a Divine testimony far more credible than that of human witnesses. This testimony is to the effect that believers possess eternal life in Christ, and only in him.

6. This is he. The Apostle reminds his readers that the Jesus of whom he is speaking is Jesus of Nazareth, who was shewn by the circumstances of his life to be the Messiah.

water and blood: the Baptism and the Crucifixion. There is probably no reference to the flow of water and blood from his pierced side, John xix. 34.

not with the water only: in opposition to false teachers, who asserted that the Christ took possession of the human body of Jesus at his Baptism, and left it before his Crucifixion.

with the water (*twice*) . . . **with the blood.** R.V. marg., *Gr.* 'in[1],' for each 'with.' The water and the blood are thought of first as the means through which our Lord came into the full realization of his Messiahship, and then as representing the permanent conditions of his redeeming work, cleansing and sacrifice.

7. (A. V., 6.) **it is the Spirit that beareth witness.** The

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[1] ἐν; the Greek for 'by' (water, &c.) is διά.

8 Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness,
the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three
9 agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the

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inner witness of the Spirit comes to the spirits of those who can receive it, and through them to others. Cf. John xv. 26.

the Spirit is the truth. Elsewhere Christ is the truth, John xiv. 6.

8. (A. V., 7, 8.) **there are three who bear witness.** The appeal to *three* witnesses was suggested by the Jewish law requiring that a fact should be proved by 'two or three witnesses,' Deut. xvii. 6; cf. Matt. xviii. 16. 'The water' and 'the blood' symbolize the events of Christ's life, and the features of his character; and also the cleansing, inspiration (Acts ii. 38), and redemption which spring from his work. These also are a testimony to Christ.

the three agree in one: *lit.* 'the three are for or unto the one thing'; they unite in testifying to and establishing the validity of the claims of Christ.

This passage under the form in which it is found in the A. V. is famous as 'The Three Witnesses.' The A. V., verses 7, 8, runs 'For there are three that bear record [*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*], the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.' The words in brackets have no equivalent in the original Greek text. They are first found in Latin patristic writings, and were gradually shaped as an expository expansion of the text during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries; they were then inserted in MSS. of the Old Latin and Vulgate versions of the N. T. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they were interpolated into two Greek MSS. of the Epistles, and into the Complutensian printed text of the Greek Testament. Erasmus omitted the words in brackets from the first edition of his Greek Testament, but promised to insert them if they could be found in any Greek MS.; hence when he met with the sixteenth-century MS. mentioned above he inserted them, and thus they found their way into the Textus Receptus, or received printed text, from which the A. V. was translated. Later still the words were interpolated in editions of the Syriac versions of the N. T. They are absent from all known Greek MSS. of the N. T., except those mentioned above, and a manuscript copy of the printed Complutensian text; from the original text of all the versions; from all the Greek Fathers, except a very few late writers who discuss Latin works containing the words; and from the early, and many of the later, Latin Fathers.

9. If we receive the witness of men. Cf. John v. 31–37, viii. 17, 18.

witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son. He that 10 believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. And the witness is this, that God 11 gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He 12 that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

These things have I written unto you, that ye may 13 know that ye have eternal life, *even* unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the bold- 14 ness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that 15

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the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness, &c. The R. V. successfully reproduces the obscurity and ambiguity of the original Greek. The general sense is 'The witness of God, the sum and substance of revelation, is a testimony to Christ and his gospel.' The A. V., with inferior MSS., reads 'the witness of God, *which* he hath testified.'

10. the witness in him: the witness of the Holy Spirit to his spirit; and the testimony of the spiritual experiences which come through faith in Christ. Cf. verse 11.

11. eternal life. See on ii. 25.

this life is in his Son. Cf. iv. 9; John i. 4.

12. Cf. John iii. 36, v. 24.

v. 13-17. *Intercessory prayer.*

I write to you who believe that you may know that you have eternal life, and may pray with confidence that you will be heard. Yet there are limits to the intercession you may make for sinners; for some you may pray and obtain forgiveness, for others I cannot bid you intercede.

13. These things. Either the whole letter, cf. i. 1, 2, or what immediately precedes, verses 11, 12. Cf. John xx. 31.

have I written unto you. A. V. inserts after these words, with inferior MSS., 'that believe on the name of the Son of God.'

even **unto you that believe.** A. V. reads, with inferior MSS., 'and that ye may believe.'

14. boldness. Cf. iv. 17.

14. 15. If we ask in submission to God's will, we are sure that

he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have
16 the petitions which we have asked of him. If any man
see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask,
and *God* will give him life for them that sin not unto
death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this
17 do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness
is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.
18 We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth

He will listen to us; and that, when He listens, He will grant our request. Cf. iii. 22.

16. a sin not unto death . . . a sin unto death. These phrases are not explained by John, and are merely a particular application of the obvious practical distinction between different grades of sin. They have been the origin of infinite controversy, and are the source of the technical classification of sins as 'mortal' and 'venial.' A parallel distinction is drawn by our Lord, Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 29; Luke xii. 10, between other sins (including even blasphemy against himself), which may be forgiven, and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which cannot be forgiven. But the analogy is by no means close. A much more exact parallel is found in Heb. vi. 4–6, x. 26–29. In Hebrews the fatal sin is deliberate and ostentatious apostasy from Christianity; here, as we may gather from ii. 18, 19, iv. 1–6, it is a similar separation from the Apostolic Church [1]. Cf. 2 John 10, 11. 'Unto [2] death' is literally 'tending to death,' and does not necessarily mean that death will ensue—the sin may not be persisted in, the tendency may be checked before the result to which it tends is reached.

he shall ask, and God **will give.** R.V. marg., 'he shall ask and shall give.' Cf. Jas. v. 14, 15.

not . . . do I say that he should make request. Cf. Jer. vii. 16, xiv. 11.

17. unrighteousness [3]**:** wrong done to a fellow man. Cf. iii. 14.

a sin not unto death. A sin which does not lead to deliberate withdrawal of faith and obedience from Christ, to wilful abandonment of the attempt to live the Christian life, or to the avowed choice of a life of alienation from God. Cf. Num. xv. 29-31.

v. 18-21. *Concluding summary.*

Finally, we summarize the truths which this letter is intended to teach thus:—We know three things: (1) that the Christian life is moral; (2) that we, the fellowship of the Apostolic Church, are

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[1] Holtzmann. [2] πρός. [3] ἀδικία.

not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not. We know that we are 19
of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. And 20
we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. *My* little children, 21
guard yourselves from idols.

on God's side; and that those who oppose us are His enemies; (3) that the Son of God was incarnate in Jesus, and revealed to us the true God, and brought us into fellowship with Him.

Having this fellowship with the true God, we must utterly renounce all worship of idols.

18. sinneth not. Cf. i. 5—ii. 6, iii. 6-10.

he that was begotten of God. The tense[1] is different from that[2] translated 'is begotten.' R. V. understands the former of the Christian, the latter of Christ. Cf. below.

keepeth him: i. e. the Christian. A. V., with some ancient MSS., reads 'keepeth himself,' a reading which implies that 'he which was begotten' is the Christian. Cf. Jas. i. 27.

19. we are of God. Cf. iv. 4-6.

world. See ii. 2, iv. 1.

the evil one: Satan.

20. the Son of God is come. Cf. ii. 22, 23, iii. 8, iv. 9, 15, v. 1-5.

understanding[3]. Cf. 2 Pet. iii. 1.

him that is true, even **in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God.** This rendering identifies 'him that is true' with Christ, and makes the passage the most explicit N.T. assertion of the deity of Christ. Cf. John i. 1, xx. 28; Heb. i. 8. In other passages which seem explicit in A. V. or R. V., Acts xx. 28; Rom. ix. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Titus ii. 13, either the text or the translation is doubtful. See also on 2 Pet. i. 1.

But even here the 'his' suggests the interpretation, 'in him that is true, i. e. God, even as being in God's Son'—to be 'in Christ' is to be 'in God.' Thus 'the true God' refers to the Father, or to the Godhead generally. Cf. John xvii. 3.

For 'true[4]' see on ii. 8.

This is the true God, and eternal life. An elliptical way of saying 'This, he that is true, is the true God, who is to us eternal life,' verses 11–13; or perhaps, 'This knowledge is to us eternal life.'

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[1] Aorist. [2] Perfect.

[3] *διάνοια*, only here in the Johannine books.

[4] *ἀληθινός*.

21. guard yourselves from idols. 'Idols' are often taken figuratively for all objects of desire or affection which seduce men from loyalty to Christ. This is a true application of the clause to modern times; but in the original the word is literal, 1 Cor. x. 14. Idolatry still flourished when the letter was written, and Christians were tempted in many ways to enter into some compromise with it. Thus at the end of a letter dealing with errors taught by those who professed to be Christian teachers, the Apostle adds, by way of postscript, that his readers must also guard against idolatry.

A. V. adds 'Amen' at the end of this verse, with some inferior MSS.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

JOHN

THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom 1
I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that
know the truth; for the truth's sake which abideth 2
in us, and it shall be with us for ever: Grace, mercy, 3
peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and

1–3. *Salutation.*

The 'elder' and those like-minded with him greet 'the elect lady and her children' in the fellowship of the truth.

1. The elder. The Apostle John or, according to some, John the Presbyter[1].

The elect lady. Either an individual or a church[2]; cf. on 1 Pet. v. 13. 'Elect' refers to the Christian calling in either case.

her children. The members of the church, if that view be taken; or if the 'lady' is an individual, still the members of the church in which she was prominent.

1, 2. whom I love in truth . . . all they that know the truth; for the truth's sake. The 'truth' is the Christian faith as held by the Apostolic Church, in opposition to the adherents of the false teachers; cf. verse 7. This 'truth' is the bond between the writer and those in fellowship with him, and those whom he addresses. Cf. 1 John iv. 6; 3 John 1.

3. Grace, mercy, peace, &c. For the formula of salutation see on 1 Pet. i. 1.

shall be with us. A. V., with inferior MSS., 'be with you,' in imitation of the greetings in the Pauline Epistles.

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[1] pp. 84, 87.

[2] pp. 86 f., others 'the elect Kyria, or Electa Kyria.'

from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found *certain* of thy children walking in truth, even as we received command-
5 ment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one
6 another. And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it.
7 For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, *even* they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.

Jesus Christ. A. V., with some ancient authorities, 'the Lord Jesus Christ.'

the Son of the Father: emphasizing, as in the Johannine books generally, the Divine sonship of our Lord.

4–11. *Warning against false teachers.*

Continue in love to one another, and in obedience to God, in spite of false teachers who deny the reality of the Incarnation. From such keep entirely separate. Hospitable customs and the ordinary courtesies of life must be dispensed with, lest you should be in any way associated in their sin.

4. I rejoice greatly. So Paul usually (Rom. i. 8, &c.) passes from the opening salutation to some commendation of his readers. Cf. 3 John 3.

I have found certain **of thy children walking in truth.** The writer had been visited by some members of the church to which he was writing, and had found that they and he were at one in their views of Christian truth. Cf. 3 John 3, 4.

we received commandment from the Father. This is partly explained in the next verse, though doubtless the commandment is thought of as embracing truth and love, i. e. the whole life of thought and action. Cf. 1 John iii. 23, iv. 21; John x. 18. It is received 'from the Father' through Christ; the phrase implies the right of Christ to speak for the Father, and claims that the writer's teaching, his form of the Christian message, rested on the authority of both the Son and the Father.

5. See on 1 John ii. 7, 8, iii. 11, 23.

6. See on 1 John ii. 5, 24, v. 3.

7. See on 1 John ii. 18–22, iv. 1–6. Verses 5–7 are almost a mosaic of phrases from the First Epistle.

This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, 8
that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but
that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward 9
and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God:
he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the
Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and 10
bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your*
house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him 11
greeting partaketh in his evil works.

Having many things to write unto you, I would not 12

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8. Look to yourselves, that ye lose (R. V. marg., 'destroy') **not the things which we have wrought.** The Christian life and faith of the readers were the work of the writer and those like-minded with him, i. e. of the apostles and their loyal disciples. The false teachers were men of influence and ability, and there was danger lest the readers should be led astray into errors which would ruin their spiritual life. Some ancient authorities read 'ye have wrought' (cf. Phil. ii. 12); with this reading the passage would mean that they were in danger of falling from the level of Christian life which they had reached, and of undoing the good effect of their influence on others. Cf. Gal. iii. 4; Heb. x. 36.

ye lose . . . ye receive. A. V., with inferior MSS., has 'we lose . . . we receive.'

9. goeth onward[1]**:** i. e. treats the Christian revelation as a mere stepping-stone to more advanced doctrine. The reference is to teachers who anticipated the Gnostics in asserting that they had gone beyond the apostolic faith, and penetrated to deeper mysteries. R. V. marg., 'taketh the lead,' i. e. grasps at authority and dignity in the church. Cf. 3 John 9. A. V. reads 'transgresseth[2],' with inferior MSS.

the teaching of Christ. Cf. John vii. 16, 17.

the teaching. A. V. adds 'of Christ,' with inferior MSS.

10. receive him not into your house, &c. Tradition states that John refused to remain under the same roof with the Gnostic Cerinthus.

12, 13. *Conclusion.*

I hope to visit you soon, and speak with you further. The children of the 'elect sister' greet the 'elect lady.'

12. Cf. 1 John i. 4; 3 John 13.

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[1] *προάγων.*

[2] *παραβαίνων.*

write them with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be fulfilled.
13 filled. The children of thine elect sister salute thee.

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13. thine elect sister. The 'sister' will be an individual or a church, according to the view taken of the 'lady'; and 'children' will be understood as in verses 1 and 4.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

JOHN

The elder unto Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth. 1
Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper 2
and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For 3
I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth.

1. *Salutation.*

The 'elder' salutes Gaius.

1. The elder. See on 2 John 1 and pp. 87 f.

Gaius: a form of Caius, a Roman name as common as John Smith. In the N. T. Gaius is found as the name of 'a Macedonian,' Acts xix. 29; a man 'of Derbe,' Acts xx. 4; a Corinthian, Rom. xvi. 23 and 1 Cor. i. 14. There is no evidence to connect any of these with our Gaius. An early but doubtful tradition mentions a Gaius who was made bishop of Pergamum by John.

whom I love in truth. Cf. 2 John 1.

2–4. *Commendation.*

I rejoice in thy fidelity, and pray that thou mayest be as prosperous as thou art loyal.

2. A most unique testimony; how few men would wish that their spiritual condition should be the measure of their health and prosperity.

3, 4. I rejoiced greatly . . . my children walking in the truth. Cf. 2 John 4.

3. I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness: i. e. on one special occasion. The R. V. marg., 'I rejoice greatly, when brethren come and bear witness,' implies that brethren were in the habit of passing to and fro between the elder and Gaius. The Greek [1] for 'rejoiced' or 'rejoice' is the same as in 2 John 4.

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[1] ἐχάρην.

4 Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children
walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou
doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal;
6 who bare witness to thy love before the church: whom
thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily
7 of God: because that for the sake of the Name they
8 went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore

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4. joy[1]. Some ancient authorities read 'grace[2],' i. e. the greatest gift God has given him is the fidelity to truth of his 'children,' i. e. disciples.

this, to hear of. (R. V. marg.) 'These *things*, that I may hear' is a literal rendering of the Greek, of which the R. V. text is the idiomatic English equivalent.

5-8. *In praise of hospitality.*

I hear of thy hospitality to Christian travellers; persevere therein.

5. them that are brethren and strangers: i. e. strange brethren, travelling Christians who would be dependent on the hospitality of their brethren in the towns they visited, especially the itinerant preachers, called by the *Teaching of the Twelve* 'prophets' and 'apostles,' for whose entertainment the *Teaching* gives full directions. Gaius's 'faithful work' had been such hospitality. A. V., following inferior MSS., reads 'to the brethren, and to strangers,' as if two classes were intended.

6. love. Not as A. V., 'charity.'

the church: to which the elder belonged.

whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey. The itinerant preachers were again visiting the church to which Gaius belonged, perhaps in company with the bearer of this letter. 'Set forward[3]:' 'the word implies both a friendly farewell and escort on the opening of a journey[4];' cf. Acts xv. 3, xx. 38.

worthily of God: regarding the help given as a service rendered to God. The phrase is common in pagan religious inscriptions (Deissmann, p. 248).

7. for the sake of the Name: of Christ; cf. Acts v. 41, R. V. A. V., in both passages, has 'his name,' with inferior MSS.

went forth: as itinerant preachers.

taking nothing of the Gentiles: probably refusing to accept hospitality from unconverted Gentiles, and therefore the more in need of entertainment from Christians. A visit to a ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.

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[1] χαράν.
[2] χάριν.
[3] προπέμπειν.
[4] Vaughan on Rom. xv. 24.

I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, 9
who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to 10
remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that

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Gentile household involved contact with idolatry. The preachers would not wish to be under an obligation to the heathen whom they addressed; just as Paul declined help from many of the churches he founded, 1 Cor. ix. 18.

8. welcome: recognize them as Christian teachers, and give them hospitable entertainment.

such: itinerant preachers.

fellow-workers with the truth: either literally as cooperating with the truth, regarded as a force acting on men; or as an elliptical equivalent of 'fellow-workers with us and you in spreading the truth.'

9–11. *Denunciation of Diotrephes.*

I am coming to rebuke Diotrephes, who usurps authority and excludes true believers from the church. Do not imitate his wrong-doing.

9. I wrote somewhat: perhaps the Second Epistle, cf. p. 91, or some lost letter. Having addressed the church, as a church, in vain, he now writes to Gaius personally. A. V., with inferior MS., omits 'somewhat.'

the church: to which Gaius belonged.

Diotrephes: 'nourished by Zeus,' probably a convert from heathenism and a presbyter or bishop of his church; nothing else is known of him. The term 'Diotrephes' is found in Homer as an epithet of kings and nobles. Diotrephes must have been a leader of the party opposed to the elder; there is nothing in the letter to indicate the character of this party. The general situation implied in the General Epistles suggests that it may have consisted of forerunners of the Gnostics, but it may also have been purely local.

loveth to have the preeminence. Diotrephes was prompted by personal ambition and a masterful spirit; the elder does not charge his opponent with false teaching (but cf. on verse 12), but with personal enmity.

receiveth us not. He induced the church to which he and Gaius belonged to refuse to accept the letter mentioned in verse 9.

10. the brethren: the itinerant preachers from the elder's

would he forbiddeth, and casteth *them* out of the church.
11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is
good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth
12 evil hath not seen God. Demetrius hath the witness of
all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness;
and thou knowest that our witness is true.

13 I had many things to write unto thee, but I am
14 unwilling to write *them* to thee with ink and pen: but
I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to
face. Peace *be* unto thee. The friends salute thee.
Salute the friends by name.

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church who attempted to visit the church to which Gaius and Diotrephes belonged. Diotrephes induced his church to refuse to acknowledge them, and even, apparently, to excommunicate them. He would not entertain, 'receive,' them himself, nor yet allow others to do so. In fact, he treated the elder's friends as the elder bade his followers treat members of the opposite party, 2 John 10.

11. Cf. 1 John iii. 6, 9.

12. *Demetrius commended.*

12. Demetrius: obviously not the Demetrius of Acts xix. 24; the name was a common one. Nothing else is known of this Demetrius: he may be mentioned as a conspicuous example of hospitality to the elder's friends in contrast to Diotrephes, or he may have been the bearer of the letter. In the latter case the very strong commendation of him was intended to help Gaius and overbear the opposition of Diotrephes, and secure a welcome from the church.

the truth itself: personified as testifying to Demetrius's loyalty to itself; perhaps hinting that Diotrephes had not been so faithful.

we: the elder and his followers. Cf. John xxi. 24.

13, 14. *Conclusion.*

I will not write more, for I hope to visit you, and speak further on these matters. Greetings.

13, 14. Cf. 2 John 12, 13.

14. The friends. Not a general term for church members, but = 'our friends,' those members in each of the two churches who were in sympathy with the elder, as opposed to the followers of Diotrephes. This verse suggests that the latter had friends in the church to which the elder belonged.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

JUDE

JUDAS, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, 1
to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and
kept for Jesus Christ: Mercy unto you and peace and 2
love be multiplied.

1–2. *Salutation.*

Jude greets his Christian readers as beloved of God and kept secure unto the coming of Jesus Christ, and prays that the Divine blessings they enjoy may be multiplied.

On the general form of the salutation see on 1 Pet. i. 1.

1. Judas: A.V., 'Jude.' The name in the original is identical with 'Judas' in Judas Iscariot; the 'Jude' of the A.V. avoided an unpleasant association. Judas (Ioudas) is the Greek form of the O.T. Judah, usually, but perhaps incorrectly, explained as 'praised' or 'praiseworthy.' Judah in the O.T. is the name of the tribe and nation, of the patriarch to whom the origin of the tribe was traced, and of various Jews of the post-exilic period. In the N.T. times it was a very common name, and was borne by several persons in the N.T. and Josephus; cf. p. 4.

a servant of Jesus Christ: so Jas. i. 1, which see.

brother of James: i.e. James the brother of the Lord; see pp. 12 f.

to them that are called. This description of the persons addressed does not occur in any other of the General Epistles, but is so used by Paul in the salutation of Rom. i. 6 and 1 Cor. i. 2. In Rom. i. 1 he applies the term 'called' to himself. The phrase denotes Christians as those who have heard and obeyed God's invitation to reconciliation and submission. On Rom. i. 6 Sanday and Headlam paraphrase it 'called out of the mass of mankind into the inner society of the church.'

beloved: A.V., 'sanctified,' with some inferior MSS.

kept for: A.V., less correctly, 'preserved in'; kept safely

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the

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by the Father for Christ at his coming, which the early church regarded as always imminent. Thus, too, God's providential care keeps His people that they may attain to greater privileges, fuller blessing, and more effectual service in Christ; cf. 1 Pet. i. 5. Such prospects are held out to the readers that they may be encouraged to reject false teaching, and to remain faithful to Christian truth.

2. Mercy, &c.: an expansion of the greeting, 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied,' 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 2, which see. The additional 'mercy' occurs in the immediate context, 1 Pet. i. 3, and in the greetings in 1 Tim i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 3. The letter of the church of Smyrna, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, opens with a similar threefold blessing, 'Mercy, peace, and love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied,' possibly based on this passage. For 'mercy' see on Jas. ii. 13. See also on 1 Pet. i. 1.

3, 4. *Reasons for writing.*

I have been eager and prompt to write to you about that salvation of which you and I are alike partakers, because I felt compelled to exhort and encourage you to brace yourselves afresh to yet more strenuous efforts for that truth which Christ committed once for all to his church. For the warnings of Christ and his apostles are being fulfilled, and there have crept in among you impious men, who deny our Master by finding a pretext for licentiousness in the liberty which they claim to have through the grace of God.

3. (2 Pet. i. 5[1].) **diligence:** zeal (*spoudē*), earnest desire and prompt and strenuous effort to realize it.

common salvation. Titus i. 4 speaks of the faith common to Paul and Titus.

exhorting: the word (*parakalōn*) includes the ideas 'exhort' and 'encourage.' Jude's readers were already on the right side; he wishes to help them to hold out against temptation and perhaps persecution.

contend earnestly: *lit.* 'contend further' (*epagōnizesthai*), i. e. strive afresh and with even greater energy than before. There are pauses for rest, 'times of refreshing' in the Christian warfare, but they are always followed by a renewed call to arms. As the

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[1] For comparison of parallel passages in Jude and 2 Peter see synopsis, p. 58, and commentary on 2 Peter.

saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, 4
even they who were of old set forth unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into

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Christian becomes more mature, greater claims are made upon him, and he needs to exercise to the full the larger measure of grace he has received.

the faith: here and in verse 20, the truths which are the object of our faith; so often in the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Tim. v. 8, &c., and perhaps Gal. i. 23. See also on Jas. i. 3.

once for all: there was no room for the innovations of 'the ungodly men' of the next verse. The principles of Christian truth and life were not a passing fashion, but permanent and irrevocable. Such verses as this, however, do not mean that Christians are always bound to use exactly the same terms and phrases, and practise just the same observances as the Apostolic Church. The essential principles are always binding, but the Holy Spirit guides each generation into an application and understanding of them suitable to its own needs.

With 3^b cf. Phil. i. 27, 'with one soul striving (as athletes) for the faith of the gospel,' and 2 Pet. ii. 21, which see.

the saints: Christians, the church.

4. (2 Pet. i. 1–3.) **certain men.** See on 1 John ii. 18.

of old set forth unto this condemnation. See on 1 John ii. 18; but possibly Jude has in mind a passage in the *Book of Enoch* (see on verse 14), 'Judgement will come upon them, because they believe in the lust of their body and have denied the spirit of the Lord,' lxvii. 10. The reference, however, may be more general, i. e. 'The men who are troubling you are the false teachers whose coming has long been foretold, and for whose sins there has been appointed the condemnation set forth in this letter.'

ungodly: a favourite word in Jude, verses 15, 18; see on 1 Pet. iv. 18.

turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Grace transferred the control of life from external rules, especially those of Judaism, to the indwelling spirit of love and devotion to Christ. This Christian liberty, which the ungodly claimed to possess, was made a pretext for following evil impulses; men professed to believe that these were due to that indwelling spirit. A similar perversion of truth constantly reappears in times of religious excitement, as for instance amongst the Anabaptists at the Reformation. For 'lasciviousness' see on 1 Pet. iv. 3.

denying: i. e. by their conduct. They did not formally repudiate Christianity; the serious danger of their example lay in the fact that they professed to be faithful Christians.

lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, how that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward
6 destroyed them that believed not. And angels which

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our only Master. A.V., following inferior MSS., adds 'God.' 'Master' (*despotēs*) implies a harsher and more absolute dominion than 'Lord' (*kurios*). '*Despotēs* . . . implies, on the part of him who uses it, a more entire prostration of self before the might and majesty of God than *kurios* would have done' (Trench, *Synonyms*, p. 95). *Despotēs* is used of the Father in Luke ii. 27; Acts iv. 24; Rev. vi. 10, and is so taken here in the R.V. marg., 'the only Master, and our Lord.' This view is probably correct; cf. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 'the blessed and only Potentate' (*dunastēs*), used of the Father. R.V. text, following the dependent passage, 2 Pet. ii. 1, couples 'Master' with 'Lord' as also referring to Christ. In 1 Pet. ii. 18, &c. (which see), it is used of the master of slaves.

5–7. *Ancient examples of the doom of the wicked.*

I would have you learn from history the certain doom of such men, from the example of the destruction of the unbelieving Israelites, from the eternal captivity of the fallen angels, and from the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose foul sins these men have imitated.

5. though ye know all things once for all: perhaps rather, 'I can remind you, because—to make this point once for all—you know the manifold examples which history furnishes to illustrate my warning.' A.V., with inferior MSS., reads 'this' for 'all things.' In 1 John ii. 20 the R.V. text has 'and ye know all things.'

the Lord. Some of the best MSS. read 'Jesus.' In 1 Cor. x. 4 Paul says that the rock from which water flowed was Christ, and the N. T. often transfers to 'the Lord' or 'Christ' what the O. T. says of God; but all analogy is against the supposition that Jude spoke of 'Jesus' as delivering the Israelites from Egypt. In Ecclus. xvi. 6–14, the certain punishment of the wicked is illustrated by the fate of the 'giants,' i. e. the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Israelites in the wilderness; cf. Heb. iii. 7–19.

6. (2 Pet. ii. 4.) **angels.** In the very obscure fragment, Gen. vi. 1–4, we are told that the 'sons of God' took wives of the 'daughters of men,' with disastrous results. From this the *Book of Enoch* developed an elaborate story of the fall of the angels through lust. *Paradise Lost* is an independent treatment of the

kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgement of the great day. Even as 7
Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.
Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile 8
the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at

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idea of the fall of the angels, based rather on Luke x. 18 and Rev. xii. 7, 9 than on this passage. There is hardly a phrase in this verse which is not found in a similar context in *Enoch*.

principality: *archē*, a term used in *Enoch* and Paul as a synonym for, or a special order of, angels; here = the heavenly status of the angels.

everlasting: *aidios*, sometimes taken as an adjective from *Hades*, the place of the dead, i. e. 'the bonds of Hades'; apparently 2 Peter, which has 'cast down to Tartarus,' understood *aidios* in this sense.

7. (2 Pet. ii. 6.) **in like manner with these.** Gross and unnatural immorality was the sin which brought about the ruin of Sodom and of the angels; and such, it is implied, was the sin of those whom Jude is denouncing.

the punishment of eternal fire: i. e. fire which wrought irrevocable destruction, and (according to ancient views as to the phenomena of the district) left conspicuous traces as permanent monuments of the Divine judgement. Josephus (*Jewish War*, iv. 8, § 4) says of the district of Sodom and Gomorrah, 'It is . . . now entirely burnt up . . . even to this day the relics of the Divine fire . . . are to be seen there.' But it does not seem that these supposed 'relics' are really traces of fire or volcanic action.

8–11. *Examples of the sin of railing.*

These ungodly men are not only licentious, but rail at constituted authorities. They neglect even such examples of self-restraint as that of Michael in his controversy with Satan, and follow in the footsteps of Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

8. (2 Pet. ii. 10.) **Yet:** in spite of the examples cited above.

in their dreamings: i. e. in their empty dreams of perverting Christian faith so as to justify insolent self-indulgence; the phrase qualifies all the rest of the verse.

dominion: *kuriotēs*, used by Paul, Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16; and

9 dignities. But Michael the archangel, when contending

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by Origen, &c., of angels (so Lightfoot on Colossians). Hence this term here and the following.

dignities: *doxas, lit.* 'glories,' are usually taken to mean angels, perhaps regarded as the guardians of public decency. According to one interpretation they appear in that capacity in 1 Cor. xi. 10, which seems to say that women should be veiled at Christian services 'because of the angels.' But no instance is quoted of the use of *doxa* for 'angels.' It does not seem likely that blasphemy against angels would be so conspicuous a sin of licentious men as to call forth this emphatic condemnation. In Rev. ii. 1, &c., church officials are styled angels; etymologically *kuriotēs* is simply 'dominion.' Probably here, though used elsewhere for angels, it refers to the constituted authorities of the church (see also on verse 11). Men who wished to set at nought the principles of Christian morality and yet remain in the church, had no choice but to attack its actual leaders and teachers.

9. (2 Pet. ii. 11.) **Michael the archangel:** only mentioned elsewhere in the Bible in Dan. x. 13, 21, xii. 1, as the champion of Israel against the angelic champions of other nations, and similarly in Rev. xii. 7, as fighting for the saints against Satan. Michael plays a large part in Jewish and Christian apocalypses and in Rabbinical tradition. In Zech. iii. 1, 2 Satan appears as the accuser, and the angel of the Lord as the defender of Joshua the high priest; and the Lord says to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' This is sometimes supposed to be the incident referred to by Jude, 'the body of Moses' being a figurative term for Israel, like 'the body of Christ' for the church, and Israel being represented by Joshua. This view is most improbable in itself. Moreover, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and other Greek Fathers state that the incident is found in the Jewish apocalypse, known as the *Assumption of Moses*. According to Mr. R. H. Charles[1], this work was probably written in Hebrew between A.D. 7 and 29, and translated into Greek in the first century A.D. It is now extant only in a few quotations and references[2] in the Fathers, and in a large fragment of a Latin translation. The Latin fragment does not include the incident mentioned in this verse. The matter in dispute was whether Satan should carry off the body of Moses, or whether Michael should be allowed to bury it. Of course Michael prevailed. Jewish tradition describes a contest between Michael and Sammael, the angel of death, as to the soul of Moses.

The illustration is an *a fortiori* argument against the railing of the ungodly. 'If an archangel maintaining a good cause spoke with

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[1] *The Assumption of Moses*, p. xiii.

[2] Including those in Clement and Origen mentioned above.

with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgement, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these rail at whatsoever things 10 they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed. Woe unto them! for they went in the way 11

courteous moderation to Satan, how heinous it must be for the ungodly, maintaining a bad cause, to rail at the authorities of the church.' The illustration suggests another application, which, however, does not seem to have been in Jude's mind, viz. 'If an archangel refrained from personal abuse of Satan, Christian controversialists should not rail at those who differ from them.' The strong language which Jude himself uses may at first sight suggest that he was more ready to commend the example of Michael to others than to follow it himself. But we must remember that Jude is not denouncing the 'ungodly' for differing from himself on obscure speculative doctrines, but for trying to find in Christian faith and privilege an opportunity and justification for gross immorality.

10. (2 Pet. ii. 12.) **whatsoever things they know not:** usually understood of the 'dominions' and 'dignities' of verse 8; either angels, because sensual men would not have the spiritual gifts by which they would know about angels; or church authorities whom they did not 'know' in the sense of recognizing. But this clause may generalize 8^b, 'they rail not only at persons above them in authority, but at truths above their knowledge,' the latter being Christian truths they were too gross and selfish to grasp. Nothing could be true or reasonable which *they* could not understand.

what they understand naturally. Like mere animals, they could only take in the physical pain and enjoyment and such material effects of actions, and so, through eagerness after the self-indulgence that seemed open to them, they brought about their own destruction.

11. (2 Pet. ii. 15.) **went . . . ran . . . perished.** These English tenses imply that the verse describes something that had already taken place; but the whole letter implies that the punishment of the 'ungodly' had not yet befallen them. Perhaps through the influence of a familiar Hebrew idiom, past tenses are used to express the certainty of a future event. 'They have followed in the footsteps of Cain,' &c., so much was past, 'and are irrevocably involved in their punishment.'

Cain differed from Abel in his mode of worship, and though

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[1] How is not clear, but this is plainly intended in the original narrative, and is assumed in all scriptural references to Cain.

of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for
12 hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These
are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when

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he was in the wrong[1] he killed his brother, just as the ungodly would gladly have killed Jude's friends.

ran riotously: *lit.* 'have been poured out,' used of spilt wine, Luke v. 37; of shed blood, Luke xi. 50; of God's love 'shed abroad in our hearts,' Rom. v. 3; hence perhaps 'ran riotously' like wine gushing out of a burst skin. R. V. marg., has 'cast themselves away through,' i. e. they became lost and ruined like spilt wine. The same Greek word is used in the translation of Ps. lxxiii. 2 for a Hebrew word meaning 'slipped.'

in the error of Balaam for hire. Balaam's most conspicuous sin was his willingness to earn money, the means for self-indulgence, by cursing God's people, another parallel to the 'railing' of the 'ungodly' and its motive. This may be in the writer's mind, but probably we should translate 'through the deceit of Balaam' by which he deceived Israel and deluded the people into immorality, Num. xxxi. 16. So Rev. ii. 14, 'Thou hast there,' at Pergamum, 'some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the Israelites, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.' Perhaps we should render freely, 'They have come to ruin through being seduced by such rewards as Balaam sought for himself or offered to the Israelites.' Balaam claimed to be God's prophet, and sought to make sinful gain from his inspiration; just as the 'ungodly' turned God's grace into lasciviousness.

in the gainsaying of Korah: better through the gainsaying, &c., i. e. a gainsaying like that of Korah. The 'ungodly' attacked church officials as Korah challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron, Num. xvi.

12, 13. *Figurative description of the ungodly.*

Such men taint and mar the fellowship of Christians, as nature is disfigured by blight and rotting vegetation, by the seething ferment of foul waters, and the lurid glare of baleful meteors. Like these too their corruption is the more horrible because they have the form and profession of beneficence.

12. (2 Pet. ii. 13^{b}, 17^{a}.) **hidden rocks:** involving unsuspected peril of shipwreck of faith and character. But the Greek word, *spilades*, also means 'blemishes,' and is replaced in 2 Peter by a couple of words, *spiloi* and *mōmoi*, which certainly mean 'spots and blemishes'; so here the A. V. and R. V. marg., 'spots.'

love-feasts: only mentioned by name, *agapai*, here and in 2 Peter; but apparently the gatherings described in 1 Cor. xi.

they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed

17–34 were love-feasts at which the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was observed. Tertullian, in his Defence of Christianity, addressed to the Roman Government, about A. D. 197, gives the following account of the love-feast, ch. 39, 'As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before sitting down to supper[1], taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say it is enough, since they remember that they must worship God even at night; they talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their hearers. After washing of hands, lights are brought in, and each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the holy Scriptures or one of his own composing—a proof of the moderation of our drinking. As the feast began with prayer, so also it is closed with prayer.' But 1 Corinthians plainly tells us that at Corinth the love-feast had degenerated into a scene of riot and drunkenness. The enemies of the faith constantly alleged that the Christian love-feasts were occasions of vile debauchery; and it is to be feared that the Church of Corinth was not alone in affording some ground for such an accusation. These social meals, especially at a time when wine was a common drink, would be an opportunity for the self-indulgence which the 'ungodly' hankered after as one of the privileges of liberal-minded Christians. But, in their ordinary, legitimate form, these love-feasts served the same purpose as the modern tea-meeting. Some of the Methodist churches, in imitation of primitive practice, have social gatherings called love-feasts.

shepherds that . . . feed themselves: a reminiscence of Ezek. xxxiv. 8, 'The shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my sheep,' where, as usually in the O. T., the shepherds are the rulers, and the sheep, Israel. See on 1 Pet. ii. 25. The word used implies that the 'ungodly' set themselves up as teachers or church officials, and availed themselves of this position to live in luxury. Such proceedings were so common in the early church that the *Teaching of the Twelve,* chap. xi, lays it down that 'No prophet who orders a meal,' i. e. directs that a love-feast shall be held, 'in the spirit, eateth of it, unless indeed he is a false prophet . . . and if any one, [professing to speak] in the spirit, says, Give me money, or anything else, ye shall not hear him;' but to the true prophet, i. e. preacher, they were to give liberally, corn, wine, oil, bread and meat, money and clothing (chap. xiii).

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[1] *lit.* 'reclining,' the attitude in which the Greeks and Romans took their meals.

themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by
13 the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of

Such liberality would be a great opportunity for the plausible unctuousness of the 'ungodly.'

clouds, &c.: the figures emphasize the idea that the professions of the 'ungodly' held out a promise of spiritual helpfulness, which their practice wholly belied. They were like clouds coming up after a long drought, exciting hopes of rain, but carried away again by the wind.

autumn trees without fruit. The word for 'autumn' (*phthinopōrinos*, cf. our *phthisis*) is only found here in the N.T., and means the late autumn, as a time of withering. The 'ungodly' were like trees which should have borne fruit, but had not, and were now past all hope of it.

twice dead. Not only dead, without leaves, for that year, and capable of reviving and bearing fruit another autumn; but also dead in themselves, with no possibility of future life: often explained as figurative of the double death of body and soul, but only an emphatic way of saying that it was absolutely certain that these men would never be of any use whatever.

plucked up by the roots. As in verse 11, present sin and future punishment are combined in the same picture.

13. (2 Pet. ii. 17^b.) **wild waves,** &c.: a reminiscence of Isa. lvii. 20, 'The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and the waters cast up mire and dirt'; cf. also Isa. iii. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not'; and Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame.'

wandering stars (*asteres planētai*): usually 'planets,' but generally understood here of comets, which for a time rush along an—apparently—erratic course and shine with great brilliance, but are soon lost for ever in the darkness of space[1]. The word *planētai* (wandering) was suggested by its similarity to *planē* (error) in verse 11, 'the error of Balaam.'

The stars in ancient times were often thought of as specially connected with angels, sometimes almost as angels. The wandering stars imprisoned in darkness are a parallel to the fallen angels and their doom. *The Book of Enoch* speaks of lack of rain, crops, and fruit, and of wandering stars 'in the days of sinners'; and refers to the imprisonment of the stars.

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[1] Many comets indeed return, but Jude would know nothing of this.

darkness hath been reserved for ever. And to these also 14
Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying,
Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy
ones, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all 15
the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they

14–19. *The arising of the 'ungodly' a fulfilment of prophecy.* Enoch prophesied that the Lord would come to punish ungodly men for ungodliness and blasphemy. These self-indulgent men, who rail at the authorities of the church, and curry favour with wealthy men for the sake of their money, are the fulfilment of this prophecy. The apostles also prophesied that in the last times there should be mockers, living according to their own ungodly lusts. These sensual, unspiritual men, who set one party in the church against the other, are the fulfilment of this prophecy.

14. Enoch . . . prophesied, saying. The rest of verses 13, 14, is a loose and abbreviated quotation from the *Book of Enoch*, a collection of apocalypses written in Hebrew or Aramaic between B. C. 95 and A. D. 70. In these apocalypses Enoch narrates various visions, including, amongst other things, the events of history from Adam to the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. It is quoted as Scripture in the *Epistle of Barnabas*[1]. It is extant in an Ethiopic version, and in portions of a Greek version.

The use made of the *Book of Enoch* in this Epistle raises a difficulty as to the canon, or contents of the Bible. It has been argued that because Jude recognizes the *Book of Enoch*, either the latter should be included in, or the former excluded from, the Bible. But the fact is simply part of the evidence which shews that the canon of the O.T. was not fixed[2] by the N.T., but, like the canon of the N.T. itself, by the Christian Church.

seventh: the sacred number, as in the case of the sabbath, the year of jubilee, &c.

came: in the vision of the last day seen by Enoch.

the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones: borrowed from Deut. xxxiii. 2, the blessing of Moses; the 'holy ones' are the angels.

15. Notice how the *Book of Enoch* harps upon the word 'ungodly,' and thus probably suggested it to Jude as a suitable epithet for those whom he is denouncing.

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[1] Mistakenly ascribed to him.

[2] As far as it ever has been fixed, the Romanist O. T. still containing books rejected by Protestants.

have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which
16 ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are
murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and
their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*), shewing
respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

17 But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have
been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus
18 Christ; how that they said to you, In the last time there

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16. (2 Pet. ii. 18.) **murmurers.** This verse is clearly intended to identify the 'ungodly' of verse 15 with the men against whom he writes. Murmurs against the heads of the church were really 'hard things' said 'against' the Lord their Master, who had inspired them. So, when Korah attacked Moses and Aaron, Moses said, 'Thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?' (Num. xvi. 11.) So Ignatius wrote, 'All of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery the apostles, honour the deacons, as you would the command of God' (*To Smyrna*, viii). When teaching is inspired by the Holy Spirit, to attack the teacher is to assail God Himself. 'Saul, Saul,' said the Lord, 'why persecutest thou me?' (Acts ix. 4.)

complainers: *lit.* 'finding fault with their lot in life.'

their mouth, &c. When it was safe to do so, they blustered, and bullied, and played the superior person, but they cringed to rich men, and flattered them for the sake of dinners and presents.

17. (2 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) **spoken before by the apostles:** apparently implying that the author was not an apostle, and that he wrote when their preaching was a thing of the past.

18. (2 Pet. iii. 3.) **how that they said.** The N.T. does not contain any apostolic saying couched in exactly these words; the verse is probably a summary of more detailed teaching often repeated. 'Said' (*elegon*) means, strictly, 'were in the habit of saying'; cf. on 1 John ii. 18.

to you. The churches addressed had, therefore, been ministered to by the apostles.

In the last time. The early church looked for a speedy close of the Christian era by the second coming of Christ; the years immediately before this would be 'the last time.' The period when the 'ungodly' and 'antichrists' came upon the scene was, however, really a 'last time'; their appearance marked the close of the first great Christian epoch, that of special inspiration. They were the most obvious symptoms that the

shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.
These are they who make separations, sensual, having 19
not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves 20

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tide of spiritual force had begun to ebb, and that a reaction had set in, through which selfish and worldly motives would gain a foothold in, and sometimes control, the church itself.

mockers. Those who 'railed' and 'blasphemed' would naturally pass to derision through their insolent assurance.

19. These are, &c.: identifying the 'ungodly' with the 'mockers' of the previous verse.

they who make separations: the A. V., following inferior MSS., 'separate themselves.' The meaning of the phrase is much disputed. It is stated that the word for 'make separations' (*apodiorizō*) only occurs once elsewhere in the whole range of Greek literature, viz. in a passage in Aristotle, where it means 'mark off by defining.' Hence it has been understood here as 'those who indulge in a subtle casuistry of immoral definitions, and—in the light of the following words—distinguish the 'natural' man from the 'spiritual,' and claim as 'spiritual' men to be superior to the moral conventions which are binding on the ordinary natural man. This would be a perversion of Paul's teaching as to the liberty of the spiritual man from the Mosaic law. 'The spiritual man,' they may have said, in the words of 1 Cor. ii. 15, 'is judged of no man.' Paul himself had found it necessary to guard against such abuse of his teaching in Rom. vi.

But the simpler word *diorizō*, in classical Greek both to 'separate' and to make 'definitions,' occurs in the Greek version of Lev. xx. 26, in the sense of 'separate,' 'I have separated you from the nations.' Hence the compound word has been taken here as 'those who separate themselves'; but the sin of these men consisted partly in their attempt to be in the church and make as much out of it as they could.

As elsewhere, one feature of their iniquity always is their abuse of the powers of earth, or heaven, or both; and as they have been compared to Korah who stirred up sedition against Moses, it seems best to follow the R. V., 'make separations,' i. e. their attacks upon church authorities divided the community into parties siding with them and against them.

sensual: A. V., 'natural' (*psuchichoi*). See on Jas. iii. 15.

Spirit (*Pneuma*). See on 1 Pet. iii. 18.

20–23. *Application.*

These examples from history and these warnings will guide you in your own life, and shew you how to treat the ungodly. As to yourselves, build up your character on the foundation of

21 on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep
yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of
22 our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some
23 have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching

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your faith; not only pray, but let the Holy Spirit inspire your prayers; commit yourselves to the safe-keeping of the Father, and persevere in the expectation of enjoying the loving-kindness of Christ—that so you may obtain eternal life. As for the ungodly[1] and those who are deluded by them, expose and punish those who promote disorder in the church; save those whom you can snatch from their influence, as from a consuming fire; and let your compassion watch for an opportunity of helping others; but be careful lest, through your sympathy with their wretchedness, you become in any way tainted with their impurity.

20. building up yourselves. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c., speaks of building upon the one foundation, Christ; the idea here is the same. The 'most holy faith' is the object of faith, the person and work of Christ. On this they were to build character and a spiritual life, partly, no doubt, through mutual conference and encouragement.

20, 21. Notice the two parallel sets of three, the Holy Spirit, the Father, Jesus Christ; faith, love, mercy.

mercy. See on verse 22.

unto eternal life might be connected with 'keep yourselves' or with 'mercy'; or, as Jude has not shewn clearly what he meant it to qualify, we may suppose that this was the hope and object to which all the exhortations in verses 20, 21 were directed. For 'eternal life' see on 1 John i. 2.

22, 23. These two verses are given very differently in the various MSS. and versions, and we cannot be certain what it was that Jude originally wrote. The A. V., following inferior MSS., has 'And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating,' &c. The R. V. text, '*And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating,*' &c. follows the two oldest MSS., the Sinaitic (א) and the Vatican (B). Instead of the first 'have mercy,' the Alexandrian MS. (A) and Codex Ephremi (C) have 'convict.'

22. some . . . who are in doubt (*diakrinomenous*): R. V. marg., 'while they dispute with you.' *Diakrinomenos* is used in Jas. i. 6, &c., in the sense of 'being in doubt'; but in Jude 9 in that of 'disputing,' and therefore probably in that sense here.

---

[1] But see notes on verses 22, 23.

them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory 24
without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our 25
Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty,

The paraphrase given above is based on the translation, 'And some convict as disputers'; &c. as the R. V. Another rendering is, 'And some convict, who are in doubt'; &c. as the R. V.; i. e. those who hesitate may be recovered by shewing them their true position; others, more deeply involved, must be rescued by prompt and strenuous efforts; others are beyond the reach of any active intervention, but may yet be objects of compassion, and, therefore, if opportunity offers may be encouraged to repent and hope for forgiveness.

23. snatching them out of the fire . . . the garment spotted by the flesh: perhaps reminiscences of Zech. iii. 2, 3, 'Is not this [the high priest Joshua] a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments.'

hating, &c. Even in our anxiety to rescue sinners we must not dwell unduly on the details and circumstances of their sin, lest our own minds become tainted. Tennyson writes of Geraint:

'There fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
Through that great tenderness for Guinevere,
Had suffered, or should suffer any taint
In nature.'

24, 25. *Doxology.*

To Him who can keep you from being tripped up by the temptations which now assail you, and from being defiled by the impurity that seeks to thrust itself upon you, and can bring you out of the present trouble and humiliation with exceeding joy into the presence of His glory; to the one God our Saviour, as there ever has been, even before all time, so may there be now, and unto all eternity, glory, majesty, dominion, and power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The closing doxology of Rom. xvi. 25-27 also begins and ends, 'To him that is able to stablish you . . . to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.'

25. God our Saviour: a favourite phrase in the Pastoral Epistles, also in Luke i. 47.

through Jesus Christ: either 'our Saviour, through Jesus dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

Christ,' or (as in paraphrase) 'glory, &c., ascribed through Jesus Christ.'

before all time, . . . for evermore: *lit.* 'before every age . . . unto all the ages.'

INDEX

[*The Numerals refer to the Pages.*]

Abbott on 2 Peter, 63.
Abraham, 106, 161, 225.
Acts and 1 Peter, 37.
— — 2 Peter, 62.
Acts of Peter, 53.
Adeney on James, 23.
— — 1 Peter, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 68.
Adversary, 120, 254.
Advocate, 128, 294.
Alford on 2 Peter, 67.
Angels, 113, 123, 140, 194, 271, 274, 332.
Anointing the sick, 31, 110, 180.
Antichrist, 81 f., 129, 136, 299, 323.
Antinomianism, 69, 82, 98, 123 f., 140, 217, 270, 287.
Asia, 112, 185.
Assumption of Moses, 93, 334.
Authorities, duty to, 115, 216.

Babylon, 40, 44, 51, 120, 256.
Backsliders, 124, 277.
Balaam, 124, 141, 276, 336.
Baptism, 117, 134, 238, 315.
Barnabas, Epistle of, on James, 17.
— on *Enoch*, 339.
Bartlet on James, 23.
— — 1 Peter, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 67.
Bishop. *See* Overseer.
Bithynia, 112, 185.
Bleek on 2 Peter, 68.
Books on the General Epistles, 99.
Brotherly love, 109, 114, 128, 131, 133, 174, 202, 217, 262, 296.
Cain, 131, 141, 306, 336.
Calvin on 2 Peter, 64.
Canonicity of General Epistles, 5.
Cappadocia, 112, 185.
Carthage, Council of, on 2 Peter, 64.
Catholic Epistle. *See* General Epistles.
Cerinthus, 80, 323.
Charity, 118, 246.
Charles, R. H., 334.
Chase on 2 Peter, 62.
Christ, Atonement, 133.
— Example, 116 ff., 220 ff.
— Incarnation, 132, 136, 310, 322.
— Messiahship, 129, 133, 301, 314.
— Names, 145.
— Passion, 116, 134, 220 ff., 315.
— Sacrifice, 200.
— Son of God, 312.
— Spirit, 113, 132, 192.
— *See also* Advocate, Resurrection, and Second Coming.
Christian, 119, 250.
Clement of Alexandria, 39 n.
— on Peter, 51 f.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85 f.
— — Jude, 93.
Clement of Rome, 16.
— on Abraham, 162.
— — James, 16.
— — 1 Peter, 38.
— — 2 Peter, 63.

Clementines, 19.
— on James, 19.
— — Peter, 50.
Confession, 31, 110, 127, 180, 293.
Conscience, 115, 219.
Conversation. *See* Manner of living.
Core. *See* Korah.
Corruption of early churches, 31.
Cyprian on 2 Peter, 63.

Daniel, 10 f.
Davidson, S., on 1 Peter, 43.
Day of Judgement 70, 125, 273, 282.
Deissmann, 206, 260, 326.
Demetrius, 91, 139, 328.
Devil, 131, 254, 305.
Didaché. See *Teaching of the Twelve.*
Didymus on 2 Peter, 64, 66.
Diognetus, Letter to, on James, 17.
Dionysius of Alexandria on the Johannine books, 74.
— — Corinth on Peter, 51.
Diotrephes, 91, 138, 327.
Dispersion, 112, 146, 184.
Docetism, 75, 78, 82, 310. *See also* Gnosticism.
Doctrine of Peter, 53.
Domitian, 41.
Doxology, 188, 248.

Ecclesiasticus, 147, 153, 284, 332.
Elder, the. *See* John the Presbyter.
Elders, 54, 119, 251.
Elect lady. See *Kyria.*
Elijah, 110, 181.
Endurance, duty of, 103, 119, 146, 177, 248.
Enoch, Book of, 93, 98, 141, 332 f., 338 f.
Enoch, Book of the Secrets of (or Slavonic Enoch), 237, 271, 273, 282.
Ephesians and 1 Peter, 35.
Epictetus, 165.
Erasmus on 2 Peter, 64.
Esdras II (IV), 268.
Eusebius, 5.
— on Canon, 5.
— — John the Presbyter, 87.
— — Peter, 51.
— — James, 19, 27.
— — 1 Peter, 38 f.
— — 2 Peter, 63 f.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85.
— — 3 John, 90.
— — Jude, 94.
Extreme unction, 31, 110, 180.

Faction (*eritheia*), 169.
Faith and works, 21, 106, 159 ff.
False teachers, 122, 129, 132, 136, 138, 140, 269, 299, 309, 322, 331.
Fellowship, 127, 291.
Flesh, 176, 215.

Gaius, 90, 138, 325.
Galatia, 112, 184.
Galatians and 1 Peter, 35.
Garvie, 165.
General Epistles, title, 3.
— — importance, 4.
— — canonicity, 5.
Gift (*charisma*), 247.
Gnosticism, 75, 78, 80, 82, 293, 323, 327. *See also* Docetism.
Godliness (*eusebeia*), 121, 155, 260.
Gomorrah, 123, 140, 272, 333.

Hadrian, 44.
Harnack on James, 23.
— — 1 Peter, 36, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 62, 68.
— — Jude, 96.

Harris, J. Rendel, 86.
Hatch on 2 Peter, 63.
Hebrews and James, 14.
— — 1 Peter, 32.
Hebrews, Gospel of the, 29.
Hegesippus and James, 28.
— — Jude, 97.
Heraclitus, 279.
Hermas, 16 f.
— and James, 17, 148.
— — 1 Peter, 38.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
Hippolytus and James, 18.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
Holtzmann on 1 Peter, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 62.
Holy (*hagios*), 113, 197.
Hospitality, 138, 247, 326.
Husbands, 54, 116, 222, 226.

Ignatius and James, 17, 258.
Inspiration, 70, 113, 122, 193, 267.
Irenæus, 18.
— on James, 18.
— — 1 Peter, 39, 236 f.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85.

James, 24.
— *Protevangelium of*, 29.
— *Liturgy of*, 29.
James, Epistle of—
— addressed to, 24.
— analysis, 30.
— authorship, 20.
— A. V., 103.
— date, 13 ff.
— occasion, 24.
— parallels with Sermon on the Mount, 15.
— — Romans, 14.
— — Hebrews, 14.
— — 1 Pet. 15, 173, 254. *See also* Faith and works, and Justification.
James, Epistle of (*continued*)—
— place of writing, 23.
— R. V., 145.
— significance, 31.
Jerome on Peter, 51.
— — 2 Peter, 57, 64.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85.
— — 3 John, 90.
— — Jude, 94.
Jesus, the Christ, 129, 133, 301, 314.
— Son of God, 133, 312.
Johannine books compared, 71 ff.
John the Presbyter, 87, 321, 325.
John the Apostle, 78.
John, First Epistle—
— addressed to, 77.
— analysis, 81.
— authorship, 76.
— A. V., 127.
— date, 76.
— occasion, 78.
— place of writing, 77.
— R. V., 290.
— significance, 82.
John, Second Epistle—
— addressed to, 86.
— analysis, 88.
— author, 85.
— A. V., 136.
— date, 85.
— occasion, 86.
— parallels with Pastoral Epistles and 1 Peter, 84.
— place of writing, 85.
— R. V., 321.
— significance, 88.
John, Third Epistle—
— addressed to, 90.
— analysis, 91.
— authorship, 90.
— A. V., 138.
— date, 90.
— occasion, 90.
— place of writing, 90.

John, Third Epistle (*continued*)—
— R. V., 325.
— significance, 88.
Josephus and 2 Peter, 63.
Jude, 97.
Jude, Epistle of—
— addressed to, 96.
— analysis, 98.
— authorship, 94 f.
— A. V., 140.
— date, 94 f.
— occasion, 96.
— place of writing, 96.
— R. V., 329.
— significance, 98.
— tabular comparison with 2 Peter, 58.
Judgement. *See* Day of.
Justification, 21, 106, 161.
Justin Martyr, 223, 236.

Kamphausen, 10.
Kingdom (of God, &c.), 264.
Knowledge, 70, 121, 126, 259, 262.
Korah, 141, 336.
Kyria, 86, 136, 321.

Lady. See *Kyria*.
Law (of Liberty, &c.), 104 f., 109, 142, 174.
Liturgy of James, 29.
Logia, 6.
Lot, 123, 272.
Love, 246.
— of the brethren. *See* Brotherly love.
Love-feast (*agape*), 275, 336.
Luke and 1 Peter, 36.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
Luther on the Canon, 5.
LXX. *See* Septuagint.

Manner of living, 197.
Mark, 41, 120, 256.
— Gospel of, 52.
Matthew and James, 15.
Mayor, 18, 23.
Merchant of Venice, 165.
Michael, 141, 334.
Moses, 141, 335.
Muratorian Canon, 18, 39.
— on 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85.
— — 3 John, 90.
— — Jude, 94.
— omits James, 18.
— — 1 Peter, 39.
— — 2 Peter, 63.

Name, the, 326.
Natural. *See* Sensual.
Nero, 41.
New commandment, 128, 136, 295, 322.
Noah, 117, 123, 237, 272.

Oaths, 110, 179.
Old Latin on James, 18.
— — 1 Peter, 39.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 2 John, 85.
— — 3 John, 89.
— — Jude, 94.
Onkelos. *See* Targum of.
Origen, 18.
— on Peter, 52.
— — James, 18.
— — 1 Peter, 39.
— — 2 Peter, 63, 66.
— — 1 John, 75.
— — 3 John, 90.
— — Jude, 94.
Overseer (*episkopos*), 252.

Paraclete. *See* Advocate.
Papias on John the Presbyter, 87.
— — 1 Peter, 38.
— — 1 John, 74.
Pastorals on 2 Peter, 62 f.
— — 2 John, 84 f.

Paul, 40.
Paul and James. *See* Faith and works.
Pauline Epistles, 70, 126, 287.
Persecution, 45, 105, 117, 119.
Peshitto. *See* Syriac.
Peter, 46.
— *Acts of, Gospel according to, Doctrine* or *Preaching of, Revelation of,* 53.
Peter, First Epistle—
— addressed to, 44.
— analysis, 53.
— authorship, 43, 254.
— A. V., 112.
— date, 43, 249, 252.
— occasion, 45.
— parallels with Luke, 36, 228.
— — Acts, 37.
— — Romans, 33, 210, 228.
— — Galatians and Ephesians, 34.
— — 1 Timothy, 224.
— — Titus, 35.
— — Hebrews, 32.
— — James, 15, 173.
— — 2 John, 84.
— — pagan inscriptions, 206, 260.
— place of writing, 44.
— R. V., 183.
— significance, 53.
Peter, Second Epistle—
— addressed to, 68.
— analysis, 70.
— authorship, 64 ff.
— A. V., 121.
— date, 67.
— occasion, 68.
— parallels with Acts and Pastorals, 62.
— — 1 Peter, 56.
— — tabular comparison with Jude, 58.
Philo and Abraham, 162.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
Pliny, 44.
Polycarp on James, 17
— — 1 Peter, 38.
— — 1 John, 74.
— — Martyrdom of, 330.
Pontus, 112, 184.
Praise, 110, 179.
Prayer, 82, 110, 134 f., 179.
Preaching of Peter, 53.
Prophets and prophecy, 113, 192, 267. *See also* False teachers.
Protevangelium of James, 29.
Psalms of Solomon, 252.

Quotation from unknown source, 108, 172.

Rahab, 106, 162 f.
Ramsay on Peter, 52.
— — 1 Peter, 41, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 68.
Reasonable (*logikos*), 33, 114, 205.
Religion (*threskeia*), 105, 155.
Respect of persons, 31, 105, 156.
Resurrection, 112, 118, 189, 233.
Revelation and Epistles of John, 71 ff.
— *of Peter*, 53.
Rich and poor, 105, 109, 156, 175 f.
Romans and James, 14.
— — 1 Peter, 33, 210, 228.

Sacrifice, 114, 208.
Saints, 140, 331.
Salmon on James, 23.
— — 1 Peter, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 62 f., 66 f.
— — Jude, 95.
Salutation, 183, 187.
Salvation, 113, 192.
Sanctification, 112, 186.
Sarah, 116, 225.
Second Coming, 54, 70, 110, 125, 176, 265, 281.

Secular authorities. *See* Authorities.
Sensual (*psuchike*), 108, 169, 341.
Septuagint, 40.
Sermon on the Mount and Jamas, 15, 31, 228.
Shepherd of Hermas. See Hermas.
Silvanus, 44, 120, 255.
Sin, universal, 127.
— unto death, 83, 135, 318.
Slaves, 54, 115, 218.
Sodom, 123, 140, 272, 333.
Sonship, tokens of, 132 f.
Soul (*psuche*), 215.
Spirit, 130, 215, 302.
Spirits in prison, 117, 234.
Sprinkling, 112, 187.
Symeon, 257.
Syriac on James, 18.
— — 1 Peter, 39.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
— — 1 John, 75.

Targum of Onkelos, 238.
Teaching of the Twelve, 6, 309, 326, 337.
— — on James, 17.
— — 1 Peter, 38.
— — 2 John, 85.
Teaching of the Twelve on Jude, 93.
Temptation, 104, 146.
Tertullian on 1 Peter, 39.
— — 2 Peter, 63.
— — Jude, 94.
Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and James, 17.
Theophilus, 18.
— on 2 Peter, 63.
Three witnesses, 83, 134, 316.
1 Timothy, 224.
Titus and 1 Peter, 35.
Tongue, use of, 107, 165.
Transfiguration, 55, 70, 122, 265.
Trinity, 186.

Uncertainty of life, 109, 174.

Virtue, 57, 121, 260.
Von Soden on Jude, 95.

Weiss on 1 Peter, 36, 43.
— — 2 Peter, 62, 67.
— — Jude, 95.
Westcott, 18, 90.
Wisdom, 103, 108, 147.
— of Solomon, 147, 162, 272.
Wives, 54, 116, 222.
World, 108, 129, 155, 166, 298.

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Revelation

INTRODUCTION
AUTHORIZED VERSION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY

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AUTHOR OF 'EVANGELICAL RELIGION, BIBLE TRUTH'
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CONTENTS

PAGE
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION 1
TEXT OF THE AUTHORIZED VERSION 77
TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS . . 121
INDEX 305

MAP

ASIA MINOR AND GREECE, showing the journeys of St. Paul 76

PLATES

THE DEAD SEA (in colour) 120
PATMOS (from a drawing) 160
PUTEOLI (from a drawing). 192
SARDIS (from a photograph) 240
PHILADELPHIA (from a photograph) 288

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

INTRODUCTION

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

INTRODUCTION

1. THE PROBLEM OF THE APOCALYPSE.

THE problem of the Apocalypse, which has come down to us from the earliest times and still waits for a solution, may be said to be threefold. It is connected with the interpretation, the authorship, and the canonicity of the book. And these three parts or aspects of the problem are mutually interdependent in such a manner, and to such a degree, that the investigation of all three must proceed concurrently. There is no sufficient external evidence, no adequate method of internal criticism, by which any one of these questions can be definitely solved, apart from a solution, at least provisional, of the others. What is to be looked for, therefore, is a slow approximation to a result which will satisfy all the terms of the triple equation, rather than an immediate conclusion which will solve one member of it.

The problem is for every believing student of the Bible not merely a scholastic, but an intensely practical, one, inasmuch as he finds this perplexing book established within the New Testament, to the whole of which we look for instruction and reproof, for inspiration and revelation of the things of God. Nay, the position which it occupies there at the conclusion, and apparently forming the climax of the inspired volume, seems to assign to it a value of a special kind. And there is nothing in our first discovery of its contents to alter this impression. A book which offers in some way or other to open up those secrets of God which yet lie hidden in the future, seems wholly in place in our sacred Scripture. It is towards some such book that our thoughts have been moving as we travelled through the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles; for all alike point forward to a consummation of all things, to a time when the kingdom of God shall be finally and completely established, when all creation shall cease to groan and travail, when the inheritance of which we have received the firstfruits shall be wholly ours. It is, moreover, towards some such book that our hearts seem to yearn as we travel through the earlier volumes of experience, discovering the contradictions between what should be and what is, accumulating impressions of the Protean forms and tremendous power of wickedness, and craving for the manifestation of triumphant righteousness. Thus both the Christian Bible and the Christian consciousness seem to demand a book of Revelation for their completion or satisfaction. And, unless the Christian church be wholly mistaken, God has provided precisely such a book in what we call the 'Revelation of St. John.'

But when we take the book in hand and read it through with care, we are conscious of a double judgement on it: on the one hand, it does answer in some degree and in certain parts to our expectation; it opens great vistas into the future; it depicts the King in His majesty, and the land that is far off; it peoples that land with those whom we look to find there—with the redeemed of the Lord, with those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; it sets their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon an unapproachable throne of glory, and places in his hand—the hand that was pierced for us—the key of all the future. And it represents that future as containing the complete and final triumph of God's people over all their enemies, of righteousness over sin. All this, and much else which is in closest harmony with Christian thought and expectation, is so plain that 'he who runs may read.'

But, on the other hand, there are in the same book elements which give rise to perplexity in varying degrees, amounting in some cases to despair of comprehending them or harmonizing them with the rest of the book. There are figures which are wholly unfamiliar to those trained only in Christian thought, images, personifications, hidden allusions, and enigmas, even a kind of cryptogram, which seems intended to veil rather than to display the truth. These things appear to impose upon the reader the alternative of either forcing upon them an interpretation of his own, or laying them aside as incomprehensible. And the difficulty is only accentuated when we try to get a connected and coherent view of the whole contents of the visions, and to relate them, as a whole, to some conceivable situation in the past, present, or future. In the first three, or possibly five, chapters this difficulty does not arise; but when the Seals are followed by the Trumpets, and these by the Bowls, yet not directly but with apparently disconnected episodes interjected, destroying the proportion and breaking the continuity; when in the twelfth chapter we seem to pass into a new world of allegorical monsters, the First Beast, and the Second, and the Third, when the many heads and the many horns of the Beast begin to play, as it would seem, an important part in human history, the ordinary reader is apt to give up in despair the attempt to follow the book any further, and to leave it out of his canon, or at best to confine himself to those well-remembered portions of it which are more on the plane of his own imagination, and are cast in forms with which he is familiar. And yet the reader who is guided by the Spirit of Christ cannot erase from his mind the conviction that this also is part of the Word of God.

2. THE APOCALYPSE IN THE CHURCH.

It is worth observing that these successive changes in the individual Christian's attitude to this book correspond very closely with those which have marked the attitude of the church as a whole. Throughout the first two centuries of the book's existence it was regarded by the church in the same childlike, unreflective way as by ourselves when first we approach it. Men were fascinated by its poetry, impressed by its stupendous imagery, above all comforted by its reiterated assurances that, in spite of all the tyrannous domination of wickedness, nevertheless 'the Lord reigneth.' About the middle of the third century, however, the reflective period of the church began; the critical spirit awoke, and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, gave voice to the very difficulties and doubts which occur to any thoughtful reader of to-day. He 'suspects that some deeper sense underlies the words, judging and measuring them not by his own reason, but rather by faith'; he concludes that 'the contents are higher than can be grasped by him.' He cannot understand how the same man could have written the Gospel and Epistles of John and also this Apocalypse. His reasons are the same as occur to us to-day. The Evangelist is so chary of referring to himself, especially by name; the Apocalyptist, on the other hand, is so insistent on his own name, his personality, his share in the visions. Dionysius thus draws out the further distinctions between the Gospel and the Apocalypse (too absolutely, as we shall see): 'The man who gives his mind to the Gospel and the Epistle will find in each of them much about life, much about light, about turning away from darkness and cleaving to truth, about grace and joy, about the flesh and blood of the Lord, about judgement and remission of sins, about the love of God to us and the commandment that we should love one another;

the conviction of the world, of the devil, and of Antichrist, the promise of the Holy Spirit, the adoption of sons; the Father and the Son are everywhere. Utterly diverse and strange is the Apocalypse in comparison with all this, hardly touching or even approximating to any of these things, having no common relation to them.' Moreover, there is the extraordinary contrast between the language, the grammar, and diction of the Apocalypse, and that of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of John. In the latter, the style is smooth, the grammar correct, the diction free from 'barbarisms' or solecisms; in the former, on the other hand, there is a marked indifference to the ordinary grammatical rules, and frequently recurring cases of what Dionysius called 'solecism' and foreign idiom.

Since his time there have never been wanting men of more or less authority in the church who enforced the same arguments, and built on them the denial that the Apocalypse is the work of John the Evangelist and Apostle, with the consequential denial of its canonical rank and authority. The opposition was in many cases sharpened or suggested by doctrinal considerations. The 'Chiliastic' controversy as to the character of the Millennium, and its relation to the Second Coming of Christ, was the cause of keen and prolonged debate in the early church: the advocates of one view naturally found invaluable support in the Apocalypse of John and the interpretation they put upon its millennarian teaching; they were therefore disposed to exalt its authority and maintain its apostolic authorship. Their opponents, on the other hand, against whom the book provided an armoury of arguments which they found it very difficult to meet, were similarly disposed to minimize its authority and to lend a willing ear to any suggestion which threw doubt on its apostolic authorship and canonicity. Views unfavourable to the book, which were based on considerations such as these, prevailed over a large section of the church for some centuries. Not to mention individual writers, who will be referred to below (p. 39), the Council of Laodicea (about A. D. 360?) omitted the Apocalypse from its Canon of the New Testament; and there is no trace of the book in the Syriac version of the New Testament known as the 'Peshitta.' In fact, it is wanting in all the Syriac MSS. of the New Testament except one. 'It is plain that the Apocalypse never became familiarly known to the Jacobite or any other of the Syrian churches. It was rarely transcribed, rarely commented on, had little influence on their religious mind, and contributed little to their religious thought[1].'

On the other hand, the Western Church was practically unanimous in its acceptance of the book as apostolic and canonical. It resisted steadfastly the inroads of this criticism, and resisted so successfully that, in the end, it induced the Easterns to revise their judgement, and restore the Apocalypse at least to respect and use in the church. Jerome in his Letter to Dardanus points out that, while the Western Church accepted the Apocalypse and rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Eastern Church rejected the Apocalypse and accepted the Epistle. But, by a kind of interchange, each received in course of time from the other the book which at first it had been inclined to exclude. That is to say, the church as a whole, like the individual Christian, in the end made good its conviction that the Book of Revelation is part of the inspired Word of God—in spite of all difficulties and dubieties as to its interpretation, and even in the face of critical considerations which were as plainly present to the scholars of the third and fourth centuries as they are to us.

With the revival of learning and of Biblical criticism at the Reformation the same process began anew. Luther included the Apocalypse in his translation of the New

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[1] J. H. Gwynn, *The Apocalypse of St. John in Syriac*, p. civ.

Testament indeed, but he relegated it, along with the Epistles of James and Jude and that to the Hebrews, to an Appendix. He seems, however, to have afterwards modified, in a sense favourable to the book, his earlier opinion that it did not proceed from the Holy Spirit. Zwingli attributed its authorship to another John, not the Apostle-Evangelist. Calvin, on the other hand, used it as apostolical and canonical; so did Melanchthon. Beza defended it against Erasmus. Thus scholars and Reformers of the first rank were ranged against each other in their judgement concerning the Revelation. But the church still clung to it, and upheld it as inspired, because (so at least its whole history suggests) the 'testimonium Spiritus Sancti' was really in its favour.

This conviction was not due, at any rate, to the fact that the church had arrived at any general understanding as to the interpretation of the Apocalypse. In this respect every new generation rather served to increase the perplexity, by propounding some new interpretation of its own; and from the time of the Reformation onwards a whole class of interpretations was added to the two which had previously divided the field. The three classes of interpretation are commonly described as the Futurist, the Historical, and the Preterist. The 'futurist' interpreters see the whole contents of the book as lying still in the future; they recognize in no part of the book (at least after the third chapter) the reflexion of a situation which was either past or present to the writer; from that point forward it is all prophecy, prediction of the events immediately preceding the Second Advent. This was the natural, one might say the necessary, view for the early church to take, for which all was yet in the future; but it has been maintained by this school of expositors right down to our own times, and especially in Great Britain, that the nearest horizon of the prophecy is still in the future for us as it was for the writer and his contemporaries

The 'historical' interpretation proceeds on the principle that the prophecy covers the whole history of the church and of the world in its antagonism to the church, from the time of its writing down to the end of the world. This school could not well have its rise until there was some considerable space of history to provide material, on to which the apostolic visions and symbols might be fitted. The period of the Reformation was naturally very rich in such material. The discovery, which then became common property, that the church was utterly corrupt, naturally led to the identification of the Pope and the unreformed Catholic Church with Antichrist; and the Catholics were not slow to make the corresponding discovery that one or other of the Beasts in the Apocalypse stood for Protestantism, and that the mystic number 666 spelt the name of Luther. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic period again gave a great impulse to this method of interpretation. So great a cataclysm might well be expected to find a place in any inspired presentation of the future history either of the world or of the church, and might well be taken for an indubitable sign of the approaching end of all things. And the demonic figure of Napoleon, with the dramatic alternation of his fortunes, and more particularly his return to power for the 'Hundred Days,' seemed to fit in marvellously with some of the predictions of the Apocalypse. Accordingly, the 'historical' method flourished with especial vigour in the early part of last century, when there were a whole series of attempts at interpretation, working back from the Napoleonic period, and forward to a date (never far away from the year of writing) on which the end was to come. But as one after another of the dates so positively foretold was passed in safety, and as the theorists thereupon discovered slight mistakes in their calculations, by which they postponed the crisis for a year or two, their systems were discredited, and the whole 'historical' method of interpretation fell into disrepute.

The third school of interpretation has been called the 'preterist,' which proceeds on the principle that the whole, or by far the greater portion, of the predictions have already been fulfilled; in other words, that the scope of the book is confined to the struggle of the early church first with the Jewish synagogue, and then with the Roman state, and that the predicted issues were realized when the triumph of Christianity was secured, say, at the conversion of Constantine.

Each of these divergent methods has its representatives to-day; the 'futurist' having perhaps less support than either of the others, the continuous 'historical' still commending itself to the majority of English expositors, and the 'preterist' finding favour chiefly among the scholars of Germany.

But now, as if the problem were not already sufficiently complicated, an altogether new element was introduced into it, some twenty years ago[1], by the appearance of a succession of theories as to the literary origin of the Apocalypse, some of which would put the greater part of its contents, so far as their origin is concerned, outside the field of Christian literature altogether. The typical theory of this class is that propounded by Eberhard Vischer, who sought to prove that the bulk and foundation of the Revelation of John is a Jewish apocalypse, which has been adapted to Christian ideas and for Christian purposes by a Christian editor—it may be John or it may be another. Whatever in the book is specifically Christian has, according to this theory, been worked in by the Christian editor; the first three chapters, the worship of the Redeemed at the close of chap. v, and again of chap. vii, and of course all the references to the Lamb, are traced to this source. This novel idea set the fashion for a number of years, and one student after another has brought forward his scheme for dividing up the Apocalypse into its constituent sources, some of them Jewish, some of them Christian, in their origin, or for detecting the hands of successive editors in this section or in that. It is perhaps fortunate that so many have followed the example set by Vischer; for with the same material and apparatus, and equipped with equal scholarship, they have conspicuously failed to arrive at any agreement amongst themselves, either as to what sources are present, or where they respectively begin and leave off, or how and by whom they were brought together to form the whole which lies before us. The situation here is, therefore, quite different from that arrived at, say, in regard to the Pentateuch, where, amidst wide difference as to minute details, there is practical agreement as to the main lines of division, and the main characteristics, of the sources out of which the Pentateuch has been produced. In the criticism of the Apocalypse, if anywhere, it is legitimate to leave the critics who wish to dismember the book to come to some understanding and agreement among themselves. In fact, their failure up till now may be taken as a fair indication that, in regard to this book, the method they adopt is a mistaken one. And for the moment at least attention is now directed away from all such theories. As Holtzmann says: 'Its inner unity is the foundation of all more recent work on the Apocalypse.'

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[1] Sporadic suggestions that the Apocalypse was compiled from three or four Documents, originally independent, were made early in the nineteenth century; but they met at that time with no general acceptance among scholars.

Nevertheless, the diverting of attention to these theories of the literary origin of Revelation has had this effect, that little progress has been made of late with the question of its interpretation. But the labour has not been lost, for, by closing certain avenues to solution, it has forced investigation into a new direction, namely the tracing of the history and origin of apocalyptic ideas, figures, and images. The one hopeful approach to a solution of the problem of the Apocalypse lies in the study of other literature of the same class and character.

3. Apocalyptic Literature.

This key to the origin and interpretation of the Revelation of John has only been put into our hands in recent years, through the discovery and critical examination of a considerable mass of literature to which the general title of 'Apocalyptic' may be given.

Our Book of Revelation opens with a distinct claim to belong to such a class. Its title, 'Apocalypse of John,' may not be contemporary with itself, but the opening words, 'Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to shew unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass,' not only belong to the book, but accurately describe its contents. What we have to deal with is, and purports to be, an Apocalypse. The word has, of course, a meaning of its own, the same as that of its Latin equivalent 'Revelation.' 'Apocalypse' is the removing of a covering or veil which has been hiding truth or reality from the eyes of men. In that sense it is used in several passages of the New Testament, e. g. 'the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the apocalypse of the sons of God.' But before the end of the first century the word had acquired a quite technical sense, as the designation of a peculiar kind of literary activity which had been much practised among the Jews of the last two centuries before Christ. The books of this class are almost entirely unknown to the ordinary Bible-student, seeing that we have only one included in our New Testament and one, not generally recognized as apocalyptic, in the Old Testament. Neither does our acquaintance with the literature of other peoples assist us here, seeing that this form seems to have been developed among the Jews alone. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that we should make ourselves, in some measure at least, acquainted with what survives of this apocalyptic literature.

The example which has been longest known, and in some respects is the most interesting, is that which goes by the name of the *Book of Enoch*[1]. The full extent of this book's influence upon the thinking and the language of the early church has not yet been widely recognized. It enjoyed great respect among both Jews and Christians down to the end of the first century, and even later among the Christians. It is quoted by name in the Epistle of Jude (verses 14, 15), and also in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Further quotations and allusions which may be traced to the same source are found in the Epistle of Jude and also in 1 Peter. Irenæus quotes it: 'Enoch also pleasing God without circumcision, man though he was discharged the office of legate to the angels'—referring to the section of this book in which Enoch acts as messenger between the Most High and the 'angels in prison.' Tertullian looked on it as itself inspired: 'These things,' he says, 'the Holy Ghost, foreseeing from the beginning the entrance of superstition, foretold by the mouth of Enoch.'

The Jews were the first to abandon the book, which they found inconveniently full of passages capable of a Christian interpretation. They were followed after an interval by the Christian church, whose perplexities on the subject may be illustrated from Augustine: 'I must confess that some things of Divine character were written by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, since this is testified by the Apostle Jude in his canonical Epistle; but they are deservedly excluded from the Jewish Scriptures, because they lack authority and cannot be proved to be genuine' (*de Civitate*, xv. 23). By the sixth century the *Book of Enoch* had fallen wholly out of use, and indeed it disappeared from the knowledge even of scholars for more than a thousand years, until, in 1773, three copies of it were brought home from Egypt by Bruce, the famous traveller. It is written in the name of the patriarch Enoch, and the greater portion of its contents consists of visions which purport to have been seen by him; but the date of its composition is certainly not earlier than the second and first centuries before Christ. It contains a long and elaborate account of the fall of the angels based upon the sixth chapter of Genesis, of their punishment announced to them by Enoch, of their petition for pardon presented by Enoch to the Most High, but refused; a long narrative of Enoch's journey under the guidance of an angel to various parts of the earth, and also to the underworld to see where the angels were detained in bonds. It describes the abode of righteous souls also, the myriads upon myriads who stand before the glory of the Holy One, the tree of Life and the tree of Knowledge. It is from Enoch that we get the names of the four archangels—Michael, Raphael, Phanuel, and Gabriel; and he also foresees the Day of Judgement when the Judge shall be the Chosen One, the 'Son of Man.' This passage may possibly be of Christian origin; nevertheless, it is worth quoting to shew the correspondence of ideas with our Apocalypse: 'On that day shall my Chosen One sit on the throne of his glory.' 'On that day I will cause my Chosen One to dwell in their midst, and I will change the heaven, and make it for everlasting blessing and light.' 'I saw Him who has a head of many days, and His head was white as wool; beside Him was another, whose countenance was as the appearance of a man, yea, his countenance was full of grace, like as that of one of the holy angels. I asked the angel who went with me, and shewed me all secrets, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, whence he came, and wherefore he went with the Head of many days. He answered and said unto me, "This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom righteousness dwelleth, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden."' Another section contains the visions in which Enoch sees the destruction which is to come on the world through the Flood, and then a foreshadowing of the history of Israel under the form of conflicts between different kinds of animals. He gives an explanation of the 'Weeks of the World,' of which there are to be ten. In the first lives Enoch himself, in the second Noah, in the third Abraham, and so on, until in the ninth the great Judgement is opened, and in the tenth reaches its climax and ushers in the end of all things.

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[1] See the article in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, 'Enoch (Ethiopic) Book of'; R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*; J. Rendel Harris in *Expositor*, 1901 (Sept. and Nov.).

It is quite plain that this apocalypse either exerted a considerable influence on the generations immediately before and contemporary with Jesus, or at least reflects a large number of ideas which were in the minds of men of these generations, and are not accounted for by the Old Testament. Such, for example, is the developed doctrine of Angels which meets us at the very outset of the New Testament, the developed doctrine of the Resurrection, and of the Day of Judgement. It is very significant, too, that no fewer than four titles of the Messiah are used for the first time of a personal Messiah in this *Book of Enoch*: Christ or the Anointed One; the Righteous One; the Elect or Chosen One; and the Son of Man. And in our Lord's own words, 'when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory,' there is an echo, it may be a deliberate quotation, of the words of this book cited above[1].

Another work of the same class is also alluded to in the Epistle of Jude. In verse 9 we read: 'Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgement, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.' This story, for which of course there is no authority in the Old Testament, was said by Origen to be found in a book called the *Assumption of Moses*, to which also references are made by several other early Christian writers. This work, which was found in 1861, is now ascertained to be of the character of an apocalypse, embodying a prediction of the history of Israel, supposed to be addressed by Moses to Joshua. This prophecy leads up to the war with Rome in B. C. 4, after which is to come the end, and the establishment of God's kingdom through all creation. The devil is to come to an end, and with him sorrow is to cease. The earth will tremble, the sun will not give its light, the horns of the moon will be broken. For God the Most High will appear to judge His people. 'And thou, Joshua,' says Moses, 'keep these words and this book, but I shall go hence into the rest of my fathers.' Soon after this the only MS. of the *Assumption of Moses* which has yet been found breaks off, and it is still only an inference from the statement of the early Fathers that the close of the book related the contest between Michael and the Evil One over the body of Moses[1].

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[1] It is thought by Mr. Charles that 'phrases, clauses, or thoughts derived from Enoch are found' not only in Jude and Revelation, but also in Rom. viii. 38, ix. 5; Eph. i. 21; Heb. xi. 5; Acts iii. 14; John v. 22, 27; Luke ix. 35, xvi. 9, xxiii. 35; Matt. xix. 28, xxv. 41, xxvi. 24.

A third document, belonging to this class, is the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, in which Baruch, the contemporary and friend of Jeremiah, appears as the recipient of revelations concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. The main part of the book was written shortly after the Fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Baruch inquires when the judgement on the wicked is to begin, and receives answer from God that the period of tribulation will be divided into twelve parts, and every part will have its plague. By another division the same period falls into two parts, 'weeks of seven weeks,' whatever that may signify. A further question of Baruch, whether the tribulation is to affect the whole earth, or only a portion of it, is met with the answer that it will affect the whole.

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[1] See further Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. 448.

Thereafter the Messiah will be revealed and a period of joy and glory will commence. Baruch thereupon summons the elders of the people to meet in the valley of the Kidron, and announces to them that 'after a little while the buildings of Sion shall be shaken down, that they may be builded again. But even that erection shall not endure, but once again after a season Sion shall be overthrown and remain desolate until the appointed time; thereafter it is to be renewed in glory and crowned for ever.' The date of this apocalypse cannot be fixed with certainty; 'but it is most probable that it was written not long after the fall of the city, when the question how God could permit such a disaster was a burning one' (Schürer)[1].

In some respects the closest parallel to our Apocalypse is provided by the strangely named *Fourth Book of Esra* or *Esdras*, a Jewish apocalypse which had a wide circulation and enjoyed great esteem in the Christian church, and may be found to-day in the English Apocrypha. It is quoted as a genuine work of prophecy by many of the early Fathers, finds a place in several Latin MSS. of the Bible, and appears with 3 Esdras as an Appendix to the Roman Vulgate. In its original form it appears to have consisted of seven visions which purport to have been seen by Esra in Babylon, beginning in the thirtieth year of the Captivity. But the actual period of the book's composition is to be found somewhere in the first century A. D., either in the reign of Titus (Ewald), or under Nerva (Hausrath), or in the time of Domitian (Schürer). The limits thus suggested being practically those which are open for the Apocalypse of John, the two books may be regarded as contemporary productions, the one proceeding from a Jewish, the other from a Christian, pen. A comparison of the two, therefore, cannot fail to throw an instructive light on our Apocalypse. The writer of

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[1] See further Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 249.

4 Esra is concerned with the eternal problem of the origin of evil and suffering, driven home upon him and his contemporaries with peculiar force by the destruction of the Holy City and the triumph of pagan Rome. Why has God given over His own people to the heathen? Israel has sinned, it is true, but have not the heathen, who rejected God, sinned yet more? And Israel's experience is only an example of the common experience of mankind—misery and pain, and the triumph of wrong over right; and if all this be the punishment of that sin, the germ of which had been implanted in all his posterity by Adam, how did Adam, the creature of God's hand, come to entail such an inheritance upon his race? These and the like questions are put in succession by the Seer, and replied to by 'the angel who was sent to me, named Uriel.' The reply is practically that he desires the impossible. Even the world of nature is full of unsolved riddles; how can man expect to discover the secrets of the moral government of the universe? But the end will bring understanding, and the end is at hand. This world of misery and mystery is to be followed by one of peace and unclouded vision. Thus 4 Esra deals with the same problem as the Book of Job, but carries it a step further; and the further step is just the specific mark of apocalyptic, the focussing of hope and patience on a near approaching end, and the assurance that another world lies beyond.

The Apocalypse of John arrives at the same point—the necessity of the unveiling of the future—by an exhibition, not of the speculative problem of evil, but of the practical necessities of the church. The Letters to the Seven Churches display briefly but sufficiently the situation which requires to be illuminated, and can be illuminated only, by light thrown upon it from the future. The problem for the church at the end of the first century is that which prompts the cry of the martyred souls below the altar, 'O Lord, how long?'—the practical problem of maintaining the faith and testimony of Jesus within small communities which were all but engulfed in the surrounding heathenism, invaded by false teaching, and exposed to the relentless cruelties of a persecuting government. To them, too, the answer of apocalyptic was, 'The end is near.'

In 4 Esra this assurance is conveyed and confirmed by means of a succession of visions, each one of which is followed by an interpretation given by the angel. Of these the most important for our purpose is that of an Eagle which is seen rising out of the sea, having three heads, twelve wings, and eight 'secondary' wings. A voice proceeding out of its body commands the wings to awake at their proper time, but the heads to sleep for the present. The wings accordingly awake, and 'reign,' the earlier ones for longer, the later for shorter, periods, and then disappear. Then the heads are roused; the middle one devours some of the secondary wings, and disappears, whereupon one of the others destroys the third. Then a Lion is seen who rebukes the Eagle and announces judgement as about to overtake it. The Judgement follows; the last head disappears; the two remaining minor wings rule for a short time, and then the whole body of the Eagle is consumed in flames.

Fortunately, this bizarre and seemingly meaningless imagery is provided with an interpretation from the lips of the angel who displays the visions, an interpretation which is valuable for the light it throws upon the whole system of apocalyptic symbols. 'The Eagle, whom thou sawest rising up out of the sea, is the fourth kingdom which appeared to thy brother Daniel in his vision; it is true it was not so interpreted to him as I am now to interpret it to thee.' The twelve wings signify 'twelve kings,' who are to reign one after the other. The eight secondary wings are also 'eight kings,' but kings whose years are to be short and few. The three heads represent three kings who are to rule with more energy and do more mischief than all the rest. 'They are called the heads of the eagle because it is they that will bring its wickedness to a climax.' The 'disappearance' of one head signifies that that king is to die in his bed. The other two are to die by the sword. 'The Lion, however, which burst forth out of the wood before thine eyes, with a mighty roar, who spoke to the eagle, and rebuked it for all its sins, that is the Messiah (literally, 'the Anointed One'), whom the Most High hath kept unto the end of the days, who shall arise and stand forth from the seed of David.'

Assisted by this interpretation, modern scholars have recognized in the eagle the Roman Empire, in the twelve wings, twelve emperors beginning with Cæsar, in the secondary wings, either pretenders to the throne or, more probably, local governors of Syria and Egypt, and in the three 'heads,' Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (Schürer, Gunkel). But the precise identification of these figures does not concern us so much as the observation that, in this apocalypse contemporary with our own, this eagle-monster with its heads and wings is authoritatively interpreted to signify the Roman Empire and its rulers, and that the course of history is plainly intended to be described in the actions and fate of the various portions of the monster's body. It is further to be noticed that the heads, wings, and minor wings all signify rulers—that heads and wings alike stand for emperors; we shall find in the Apocalypse of John that, in like manner, the 'heads' and 'horns' of the monster do not need to be differentiated, but stand all alike for rulers also. The Lion, signifying the Messiah, finds of course a parallel in the 'Lion that is of the tribe of Judah' (Rev. v. 5); and here also he appears for Judgement. Of great interest also is the remark of the angel that the interpretation he is about to give is not the same as that understood by Daniel, for it shews that this Seer was conscious of receiving new interpretations of earlier visions; in other words, that it was part of his function as a writer of apocalypse to recognize and proclaim their fulfilment in the historical circumstances of his own time.

The fourth vision also throws light on the method of apocalyptic. It is that of a woman who weeps and mourns because of the death of her son on the very day of his marriage. Even while the Seer is speaking with her, 'suddenly her countenance shone, and her appearance became as the brightness of lightning; as he continued to gaze, behold, the woman was no longer to be seen, but in her place a builded city.' The interpretation is then given by the angel, to the effect that the woman is Sion (cf. Rev. xii. 1 ff.), and the death of her son represents the destruction of the city; wherein it is interesting to observe that two different figures, mother and son, stand really for the same thing, but for the same thing in different aspects—the mother for the ideal city, the son for the city in its material form. In the Apocalypse of John also it will be found that similarly contrasted figures present different aspects of the same thing—e.g. seven lamps, seven eyes, seven horns, all standing for the 'seven Spirits of God.'

The sixth vision in the same book is that of a man who comes forth out of the heart of the sea, and 'flies with the clouds of heaven.' An 'innumerable host' of men are gathered together to wage war upon him, but he destroys them all, sending forth 'from his mouth something like a fiery stream, from his lips a burning breath, and from his tongue a torrent of sparks' (cf. Rev. ix. 18, xi. 5, xix. 15). The man then calls to himself another 'peaceful' army, who approach, some with sorrow, others with joy. According to the interpretation of this vision the 'Man' is he through whom God will 'redeem creation,' the Messiah, 'my Son,' who comes to destroy the hosts of the wicked, but to gather to himself the 'ten tribes' who had been deported by the king of Assyria.

The whole of this book, but especially the fourth, fifth and sixth visions will repay closer study by every one interested in the Apocalypse. For it also reveals the working of the Jewish mind under apocalyptic forms at a period contemporary with John. The writer is plainly a thoughtful, earnest, truly pious man. He attributes his privilege as the receiver of visions to his habit of deep pondering—to use his own word, 'burrowing in'—the things of God. His heart is genuinely affected by the problem of the fate of the heathen who know not God. He seems to have gathered materials for the imagery of his visions from many different quarters, and yet 'he stands over against these materials as master, not as slave.' His method of dealing with them is well described by Gunkel: 'Both visions (fifth and sixth) contain allegories. We distinguish among the allegories (1) "allegorical material," that is, material into which an allegory has been read; and (2) "allegories" in the proper sense—which have been originally composed as such by the writer. The two styles can be recognized by this mark, that the "allegorized material" is easily to be understood apart from any interpretation, while at the same time the interpretation itself frequently appears to be somewhat far-fetched (a good example is in John's Apocalypse chap. xii), whereas the original allegories, when they are not devised with special skill, commonly suffer from the fact that they yield no intelligible meaning apart from the interpretation to which they point.'

And yet this Apocalypse is not merely a mosaic of earlier fragments put together with literary art and skill. The recognition that the author has incorporated such material, and has made use of traditional symbols, imagery or conceptions, by no means invalidates his claim to speak in the spirit of prophecy, on the ground of visions which he had actually received. Gunkel, who in an earlier work had been inclined to deny this, in his Introduction to 4 Esra accepts and enforces it in a striking way. Commenting on the statement that 'actual spiritual experiences were found only in the era of the prophets, and again in that of the New Testament,' he says: 'This is correct only in so far as official Judaism, that which was governed by the Canon, certainly admitted as valid revelations of God those alone which are found in the Canon of the Old Testament, and adjudged its own period to be wholly deserted by the Spirit of God. It is, however, another question whether such vision-situations as are described in 4 Esra actually existed or not. Such phenomena are in reality not the property of one epoch, but present themselves in all times and in all places, and are indeed still to be found among ourselves; the spiritual content which unites itself to them varies, as does the estimate that is passed upon them; the phenomenon itself always remains the same. The belief, therefore, that mysterious phenomena of this kind were simply impossible in Judaism after the close of the Canon is only a prejudice. Rather does the sudden reappearance of a like phenomenon in the New Testament period, coupled with the fact that contemporaries evince an immediate comprehension of "the Spirit," acquaint us that these spiritual phenomena have never quite died out in Judaism. They were only driven into a corner by the weight of the Canon. The general opinion that revelation took place only in ancient times compelled the Seer to write under the mask of some old, recognized prophet. . . . But these things are presented in 4 Esra with such truth to nature, and hang so closely together with the inward situation of the author, such as was undoubtedly realized by him, that we may have every confidence that we have here to do with facts[1].'

Mutatis mutandis, these remarks apply to the whole class of apocalyptic literature. Concerning the other members of the class, however, it must suffice to record the names of the more important, and refer the reader to the works in which the whole subject is exhaustively treated[1].

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[1] Gunkel in *Kautzsch's Pseudepigrapha*, p. 342. See also Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 763.

All these represent apocalypses of Jewish origin, though some of them, as we have them, contain also Christian elements or betray Christian influence. But the interest in this literary method and the practice of it were not confined to Judaism. Rather were they part of the heritage taken over by the Christian church. The well-known *Shepherd of Hermas* both speaks in the spirit and is moulded in the form of an apocalypse. And there existed also in early times Apocalypses of 'Peter, Paul, Thomas, and Stephen.' Nor need we look outside the New Testament to find traces of the same method and point of view. The great eschatological discourse in Matt. xxiv. 1–51 (cf. Mark xiii. 1–7; Luke xxi. 5–36) moves on the plane of apocalyptic, and employs many of the figures and symbols to which this literature had already given currency.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

The class of literature to which these works belong, either in whole or in part, has certain well-marked characteristics both of an external and of an internal kind. It displays a certain common religious background, and a certain common relation to the circumstances of the time out of which it springs. Apocalyptic is the successor of prophecy, the form of religious admonition and instruction to which men had recourse who were conscious that for them there was no longer any 'open vision.' It is, therefore, at once the continuation of prophecy, and sharply distinguished from it. The prophet speaks directly to the people[1]; the apocalyptist writes in solitude what men may read in public (Rev. i. 3). The prophet speaks what God the Lord has spoken; what he speaks is afterwards committed to writing. The apocalyptist writes, describing what God the Lord has given him to see. The prophet is a speaker, an orator, a preacher. The apocalyptist is a seer, a ponderer of what he has seen, a student of what those before him have written.

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[1] *The Ascension of Isaiah*; *The Book of Jubilees*, or *Little Genesis*; *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; *The Sibylline Oracles*. See on the whole subject Harnack, 'Apocalyptic Literature' in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah*; Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*; and the relative articles in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

The distinction between prophecy and apocalyptic will be further seen by observing the different religious backgrounds from which they severally spring. Prophecy looks for the manifestation of Jehovah's righteousness and power in the near future, but on the stage of Jewish history, and through the action of forces already operative in human affairs. Apocalyptic, on the other hand, predicts a like manifestation indeed, but thrusts it back behind a great crisis, transposes it into the key of universal history, and anticipates the intrusion of new forces, demonic and Divine. The drama of prophecy is transacted on the plane of this world; the drama of apocalyptic upon the double plane of 'this world' and 'the world to come'; its central principle is expressed in the Jewish saying, 'Deus non unum sed duo secula fecit.' Isaiah, for example, looks forward to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom upon earth, when 'the cow and the bear shall feed, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and none shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.' The apocalyptists, on the other hand, look through and beyond any such 'tentative' realization of the Divine kingdom here to 'a new heaven and a new earth.' The centre of the prophet's hopes is a restored and glorified Sion upon earth; the apocalyptist fixes his gaze upon a 'new Jerusalem coming down from heaven.'

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[1] See G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, ii. 49 f., 276 ff.

This distinction in character between prophecy and apocalypse is due, in part, to certain profound modifications in the conception of man, of God and of the scope of the Divine activity, and in part to the circumstances of the times when apocalyptic literature flourished. The apocalypses have been called 'Tracts for the Times,' and, in fact, 'Tracts for Bad Times.' They are specially addressed to a generation which discovered a cruel contradiction between its faith and its experience, between things as they ought to be in God's world and for God's people, if their trust in God be not vain, and things as they are. It is said sometimes that apocalypses are the product of a period of despair. But this requires qualifying. The despair from which they spring is despair of the present, and despair of the immediate future; but it is not despair of the end. Rather is it an attempt to bring the certainty of ultimate victory and deliverance home to troubled minds with such intensity that it appears to be immediately at hand. They were, indeed, to a certain extent a protest against the temper of moral and intellectual scepticism which is the real danger of such periods. This temper shewed itself at least in certain sections of the Jewish people during the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ; it seems to find utterance in the Book of Ecclesiastes, with its judgement upon human life as *vanitas vanitatum*, and its want of outlook upon a higher form of life, its *fin de siècle* weariness which lies near unto despair. The despair of the true Israel, however, was like the despair of every truly religious man, which flings him back upon God. As the climax of individual confidence is expressed in 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him,' so Israel's and the church's faith may find its highest utterance in a form of literature which realizes with poignant intensity the agony of the present and the yet greater agony, it may be, of the immediate future, only to grasp with firmer hand the Divine Presence through it all, and the Divine event towards which all moves. And this form of literature is apocalyptic.

The development of such a form was also favoured by, as in turn it helped to carry further, certain changes of thought which mark the same period. These may be observed as affecting the conceptions of the world as God takes to do with it, of man and of God.

The 'world' of the prophets consisted practically of God's people, Judah and Israel, and 'the nations around,' Edom, Moab, and Syria, with Egypt and Assyria at the opposite extremes. With the smaller of these the kingdom of Israel or Judah might dare to measure strength. Even the two large powers were so countered by one another that Israel could always look to the one for deliverance from, or protection against, the other. There was nothing in the 'world,' as so understood, to preclude the rise of a Messianic state.

The situation changed with the rise of the Greek kingdom. From that time forth the Jews were in contact with an empire that was in a new sense 'world-wide.' Alexander laid a net of Greek dominion over the whole East from Greece to Persia. Then came Rome with an organization of government such as the East had not known before, Rome to whom even Egypt was but a province, her granary. It followed, almost of necessity, that the hope of political independence, which had been part of the original Messianic conception, died in the hearts of the people—to know only occasional and spasmodic revivals. But it had a resurrection in the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature. In its new form it burst the swaddling bonds of Jewish politics; for many who spoke through these books, or nourished their faith upon them, the expected kingdom of Messiah became as wide as the kingdom of the oppressors; not the kingdom of Israel alone, but 'the kingdom of the world' was to become 'the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.'

Thus was completed in the apocalypses the process, the beginnings of which we see in the later prophets—the emancipation of the world's hope from the limitations of a merely material destiny.

There went along with this change in the view of the 'world' a change in the conception of human life, one of the most momentous in the history of human thought. The roots of the belief in immortality may be found in the Old Testament, but its development into an essential part of the religious consciousness is the fruit of the apocalyptic period. The hope of immortality does not appear to have formed part of the original Hebrew conception of human life, and the absence of it made their life even more perplexing to many of God's people than it is to us. For if God did not vindicate His people and their trust in Him here, there seemed to be no opportunity for Him to do it at all.

> 'Shall the dead praise thee
> Or they that go down into the pit?'

We may see the dawning of this great hope in the later prophets and in Job, a blessing which came to men who in the darkness clung to God saying, 'Except Thou bless us we will not let Thee go.' But it was during the obscure and almost dumb period to which most of these apocalypses belong that this hope became a conviction, and the conviction of many. We cannot say that, even in the time of our Lord, it was the conviction of the whole people; the priestly, aristocratic, and conservative party known as the Sadducees seem to have resisted it as a heresy; they said 'there was no resurrection'; and thus in our Lord's time the Jews were still divided on the question. Jesus by his teaching, and pre-eminently by his resurrection, both ratified and illustrated this doctrine of immortality, with the profound revolution in the conception of man and of human life which it carried with it. He 'brought life and immortality to light,' kindled a beacon beyond the valley, nay, rather lit up as by the radiance of the risen sun the 'land of far distances,' where hitherto had been only dim twilight and a shadowy existence, guessed, not known.

A third change of equal, or even greater, importance was wrought out during the same period, and again largely through the influence of this literature: a change in the conception of God and His relation to created things. Speculation on the Being and Nature of God was absent from the minds of the early Hebrews. Enough for them that He was, and that He was the Rewarder of them that seek Him. God was a fact. He was *their* God. He dealt personally with Abraham. He dealt with the people through Moses and Samuel. He moved with His people through the wilderness. He abode with them in the land which was theirs because it was His. It would be an anachronism to say that they thought of God as immanent; but they did not think of Him as transcendent. But the tendency from the time of Isaiah onwards had been towards a conception of God as removed, and ever further removed from contact with the things of earth and from immediate intercourse with men. This becomes very marked in apocalyptic literature, and one of its indications is the development in this period of a doctrine of Angels, an order of created but superhuman beings, who were regarded as mediators of intercourse between God and man. They were felt to be necessary in order to bridge the gulf which seemed to be ever widening, as the sense of sin, both individual and national, became stronger in the Jewish people. The profoundest recognition of God's nature in the Old Testament had held both conceptions in one grasp of faith, as when He was recognized as 'the High and Holy One,' who at the same time 'dwelt with him that is of a contrite heart.' The tendency, at least of apocalyptic, was to develop one side alone of this all-comprehending conception, emphasizing the transcendence of the Divine Being. The two sides were brought together again, each in its highest and deepest form, when 'the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us'; and one of the marks which most strikingly distinguishes our Apocalypse from other books of this class is the way in which the exalted 'Jesus' is at once in direct communication with the Seer, and clothed in the attributes of the Most High.

These being the chief elements in the religious background of apocalyptic literature, the books of this class have also certain external characteristics in common. Thus they will be found usually to contain two elements, one of earnest exhortation to faithfulness, patience, and endurance, the other of prediction of the approaching end. For the apocalyptist there is no longer any hope of progress by development; he announces, and insists on, a crisis, a catastrophe, as the absolutely necessary introduction to a new era. The confusion, the sufferings, the disasters he describes, all move forward to a climax, but they are for him 'the beginning of birth-pangs'; out of them is to come, for those who believe and endure, new life and a new world. This anticipation of catastrophe is one great motive of apocalyptic. It is religious because it recognizes that this also comes from God. It is of faith and hope because it proclaims that the righteous shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

Another external characteristic which these apocalypses have in common is that they, with one great exception, are pseudonymous—are written in the name, and, as it were, under the mask, of some great figure of the past. Enoch, Moses, Isaiah, Baruch, these and other great names were used in them. Into the motives of this practice it is not necessary here to inquire; they were probably in part motives of precaution against the consequences of open speaking on what were, to some extent, political questions, partly motives of modesty, not unnatural when men felt the prophetic impulse, but knew it would not find recognition from their countrymen. But our Apocalypse differs in this point from all the others. It differs obviously in so far as the name in which it is written is not that of a man belonging to the remote past, but that of one who was certainly a contemporary of the generation which saw its production. And no writer of importance now suggests that this Apocalypse is pseudonymous; by whomsoever it was written, he was a man who rightly gave his name as John.

Another remarkable feature of this literature is the large amount of common material which is employed by one after another of the apocalypses. The basis of them all may be said to be in certain portions of the Old Testament, the theophanies in Isa. vi and Ezek. i, the prophecies on Babylon in Isa. xiii, xiv, and Jer. i, ii, the predictions concerning Gog and Magog in Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix, the fourth chapter of Joel, the fourth chapter of Malachi, and the Visions of Zechariah. But especially the Book of Daniel has contributed conceptions and symbols which became apocalyptic conventions, part of the framework or the setting in which, as it were, from thenceforth apocalyptic ideas must be set forth. The representation of the kingdoms of this world under the symbol of different monsters, of their kings as heads of the 'Beast,' the 'abomination of desolation,' and the computation of the end by means of cryptic periods, are only some of the features derived from Daniel which reappear in successive apocalypses.

An attempt has recently been made by Gunkel and others to account for other 'common material' in this literature by tracing it to sources outside the Old Testament, and Jewish literature, to sources in the religions of Babylonia or Persia. But the investigation has not gone far enough, and probably the materials are insufficient, for any decisive results to be obtained.

A valuable investigation might be made as to the attitude taken up by each successive apocalyptist to this traditional material. And one result would probably be the discovery that he regards himself as to a large extent an interpreter of earlier apocalyptic prediction. We must understand that for many generations the minds of men were turned in this direction, sometimes more, sometimes less, persistently according to the fluctuations of national fortune; their imaginations were possessed by these symbols; they would be seeking in the events of their day for signs of the fulfilment of prophecies like those of Daniel. And the writer of an apocalypse was prompted to his work, in part at least, by the conviction that he had found the key to their interpretation. He incorporated them in his own apocalypse, and did so in such a way as to indicate, either by the setting he gave to each familiar symbol, or by some modification of its form, the time or manner in which he anticipated or recognized its fulfilment. We have seen a striking illustration of this attitude in 4 Ezra, where the angel explains that, in interpreting the fourth kingdom in Daniel of Rome, he is not giving the interpretation of Daniel, for whom the fourth kingdom meant the Græco-Syrian state. It seems probable that this feature of apocalyptic presents itself in our Apocalypse. Any reader who brings to its study a tolerable familiarity with the prophets of the Old Testament will recognize how great is the use made of their writings by the writer of the Book of Revelation. He will not only be able to trace both ideas and the form or symbol in which they are expressed to the Scriptures of the Old Covenant, but will find also many direct quotations, and still more indirect allusions. A glance at one of the modern editions of the Greek Testament (the Stuttgart, or Westcott and Hort), in which such passages as are directly based on Old Testament sources are printed in heavier type, will shew how considerable is the amount of this material. And if we find reason to suppose that John derived some of his material, not only from the Old Testament, but also from extra-canonical books, and especially from apocalypses which were current in his generation, it would be only what the comparative study of this literature would lead us to expect.

5. THE AUTHOR.

The Book of Revelation claims to have been written by 'John.' Not once only, but twice at the beginning (i. 4, 9), and once towards the end of the book (xxii. 8), the writer names himself thus. And, as we have seen, the Christian church down to A. D. 240 both admitted the claim and unhesitatingly recognized in this 'John,' the son of Zebedee, the apostle of Jesus Christ. In the allusions to this book down to the time of Dionysius there is, on the one hand, a total absence of doubt (saving the cases of the *Alogi* and Caius) that the Apocalypse is the work of the Apostle John, and, on the other hand, more than one direct assertion that he was the author.

Of internal confirmatory evidence there is none that can be called direct, and not much that is indirect. It is indeed hardly to be expected in a work of this class. But three points deserve to be noted. First, there is nothing in the Book of Revelation, or in the personality of the author as there suggested, that conflicts with the *character* of the Apostle John as it is indicated in the Synoptic Gospels. On the contrary, there is much in the gospel portrait of the son of Zebedee which harmonizes well with the tone and temper of the Apocalypse. He and his brother had been surnamed by Jesus himself 'Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder' (Mark iii. 17). The characteristics which must have been present to suggest and to justify such an appellation, display themselves in the over-zealous indignation which prompted the sons of Zebedee to wish fire to descend from heaven and destroy the inhospitable Samaritans (Luke ix. 54), and in the impetuous action of rebuking the exorcist whom they 'found casting out devils' in Jesus' name, but without his authority. Highly significant for the connexion between the son of Zebedee and the Apocalypse is the request made by the two brothers (Matt. xx. 20), or by their mother on their behalf (Mark x. 37), 'Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on *thy* left hand, in thy glory' (Matt. 'in thy kingdom'). And, again, the determination with which they accept the condition offered to them by Jesus, even without the granting of the request, marks the same strenuousness of character and of faith which underlies the writing of the Apocalypse. The problem of the relation between the 'son of thunder' and the 'apostle of love' does not demand our attention here; but it may be observed that its difficulty would certainly diminish if the date of the Apocalypse were brought back, as many have seen reason to think it should be, from the end of the century to the year A. D. 70 or thereabouts.

Secondly, it is plain from the book itself, and in particular from the Letters to the Seven Churches, that the author was one who occupied a position of unusual prominence and authority in the churches of Western Asia Minor. To all of the churches to which he writes he must have been known by reputation, and to some, if not to all, by sight and hearing. The combination of authority and personal humility with which he writes is the mark of a man who knows that he needs no credentials. And it may be asked, Of what John, except the Apostle, could that be said in relation to all of these seven scattered churches? If John the Apostle spent the latter part of his life in Asia Minor, as tradition so strongly asserts that he did, and exercised the influence which it ascribes to him, it is not credible that another John, writing to the very centres where his influence was greatest, could present himself, as the writer of the Apocalypse does, giving his name and nothing more, and yet speaking with such a voice of authority. As it has been tersely put by Holtzmann: 'Either John [the Apostle] wrote it, or John was never at Ephesus.'

It is true that the writer nowhere describes himself as an apostle, and a good deal has been made of the fact. But such an avoidance of the title might have more than one simple explanation. It is certainly a feature in common with the Fourth Gospel, the writer of which is so careful to allude to himself only indirectly; and the comparison is not vitiated by the fact that, in the Apocalypse, John does name himself. The altogether different character of the work required at least the naming of the author, on whose personal authority its whole value depends. The writer of the one is a chronicler; of the other, a prophet.

Thirdly, it is no serious objection to apostolic authorship that the writer in that case assigns to his own name a place, along with those of the other apostles, in the foundations of the heavenly city (xxi. 14). 'The apocalyptic writer is simply describing the heavenly city as it was shewn to him. On the foundations are the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Now, we may fairly ask, What reason can be given why the beloved apostle should not have related this? Was he, who, with his brother James, sought for the highest places of honour in the future kingdom, likely to have depreciated the apostolic dignity, simply because he himself was one of the Twelve? And, on the other hand, Was he, whose personal modesty was as notable as his apostolic zeal, likely, in relating such high honour done to the Twelve, to insert a notice providing against the possible mistake being made of not counting himself among them?[1]' (Alford.)

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[1] The writer 'speaks no less objectively of the "prophets" among whom he certainly classes himself; and Paul uses the same figure in the same objective way of the Twelve' (Eph. iii. 5, ii. 20). See Bacon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 237.

When we turn to the external evidence concerning the authorship, it is found to be very strong in favour of the Apostle John. It falls into three classes, viz. (1) The evidence that the Apocalypse was written by John the Apostle; (2) the evidence that it was written by a John, whence it may be fairly presumed that the Apostle is meant; and (3) the evidence that it was regarded by the early church as inspired Scripture, and therefore presumably the work of an apostle.

(1) The earliest definite statement is found in the *Dialogue* of Justin Martyr (*circa* A. D. 140), to the effect that 'a certain man, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation (apocalypse) which came to him' that believers should reign a thousand years in Jerusalem. Tertullian (*circa* A. D. 200) frequently ascribes the book to John the Apostle; thus, 'for the Apostle John also in the Apocalypse describes a sword proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord'; 'This heavenly city was both known by Ezekiel and seen by the Apostle John.'

(2) The evidence under this head is only a degree less direct, and is conclusive, except in the one possible case that the author was not John the Apostle, but 'John the Presbyter' (see below). Irenæus (*circa* A. D. 180) declares frequently and decisively that the Apocalypse was written by 'John, a disciple of the Lord.' That he understood by this the Evangelist, is clear from a passage in which he describes him further as 'he who also leaned upon His breast, and hath himself given forth a Gospel, dwelling at Ephesus in Asia.' Clement of Alexandria, referring to the four and twenty elders, adds, 'as John says in the Apocalypse.' He at least 'knows only one John, the Apostle' (Bousset), and distinctly states that it was John the Apostle who 'on the death of the emperor went from the island of Patmos to Ephesus'; and in his *Commentary* on Matthew he plainly expresses the opinion that it was John, the son of Zebedee, who saw the visions

of the Apocalypse in the island. There is further the testimony of Eusebius that three different bishops (Melito of Sardis, Theophilus of Antioch, and Apollonius of Ephesus), all before the close of the second century, wrote books or treatises in which they used 'the Apocalypse of John' as authoritative. The Canon of Muratori (*circa* A.D. 200) says that 'John in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, yet says to all . . .', where it is clear from the context that the reference is to the Apostle. And the general opinion held in the first two centuries is proved in an indirect but striking way, by the form in which the Roman Presbyter Caius (*circa* A.D. 212) ascribes the authorship to Cerinthus: 'through visions purporting to be written by a great Apostle.'

(3) The evidence that the Apocalypse was regarded by the church of the second century as inspired Scripture is unusually copious. Laying aside as indistinct and indecisive the allusions to the Apocalypse which some have discovered in the letters of Polycarp and Ignatius, it seems probable that the book was known to Papias, and by him regarded as authoritative. The evidence of this is found in the fact that Andreas of Cappadocia, at the end of the fifth century, refers to Papias along with Irenæus, Methodius, and Hippolytus, as having testified to the genuineness of the Apocalypse, and proceeds to quote from a work by Papias his comment on Rev. xii. 7-9. Now we know from Irenæus that Papias was 'a hearer of John,' and 'a companion of Polycarp,' and as he was also bishop in Hierapolis, within the circle of the Seven Churches, the fact that for him 'the Apocalypse ranked as authoritative' (Holtzmann) is of great importance.

The earliest indubitable citations from the book are found in the Letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne, describing the persecution they underwent in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. They expressly quote the Book of Revelation as Scripture: 'That the Scripture might be fulfilled, let him that is lawless be lawless still, and him that is righteous be righteous still.' To the same class of evidence belong the cases in which the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse are bracketed together, as by Hippolytus, one of whose works (the title of which was inscribed on his statue) was *Concerning the Gospel and Apocalypse of John*; and also by Origen, who speaks of John, 'who lay on Jesus' breast,' as the one who left a Gospel, and wrote also the Apocalypse.

All these testimonies are anterior to the date when the question of the authorship was first seriously raised by Dionysius. It is not necessary to adduce the testimony of later authorities to the apostolic and Johannine authorship. It is both abundant and definite, including nearly all the names of note in the church down to and including Jerome. The exceptions within the Catholic Church are Dionysius (*circa* A. D. 247), Eusebius the historian (*circa* A. D. 270–340), and Cyril of Jerusalem (*circa* A. D. 386); to them must be added the heretical sect of the *Alogi* at the end of the second century, the Roman Presbyter Caius (*circa* A. D. 205), and the Canons of the Council of Laodicea (*circa* A. D. 360). The *Alogi*, according to Epiphanius, rejected all the writings of John. Caius roundly attributed the Apocalypse to Cerinthus. Neither of them, therefore, betrays any sign of a tradition that it was the work of another John. This idea appears for the first time in the criticism directed against the book by Dionysius. His argument has been sketched above[1]. It turns wholly on the internal difficulties, and the contrast between the Apocalypse and the Gospel. But it is plain that, apart from a possible reference to the *Alogi*, he has no tradition of non-apostolic authorship to appeal to. 'That he [the author] is called John, and that this writing is John's, I will not deny. For I admit that it is the work of some holy and inspired man.' What he cannot comprehend is that it is by the son of Zebedee, who wrote the Gospel according to John, and the General Epistle. Casting about for some one on whom to fix the authorship, he hazards the opinion that there were many called after the Apostle John, and recalls the fact that there was at least one other who bore the name in the early church, John Mark. Whether he were the author, he would not like to say, for there is no record that he was ever in 'Asia.' 'But I think it was some other of those that were in Asia; since they say that there were two monuments at Ephesus, and that each of them is reported to be a monument of John.' It will be seen how the theory of two Johns had its rise, at least for Dionysius. A legend that there were two monuments or tombs at Ephesus, to both of which the name of John was attached, is its only basis. And for that legend, of course, more than one different explanation is readily conceivable. It is plain that no tradition had reached Dionysius, connecting the Apocalypse with a John who was known as 'John the Presbyter'; otherwise he would certainly have welcomed and recorded it. The silence of Dionysius on this head is, at least, as significant as the 'silence of Eusebius' on the other side.

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[1] See p. 6.

The judgement of Eusebius can best be described as wavering, with an inclination to deny the full canonicity of the Apocalypse. But as there is reason to suppose that this inclination in his case was due to other than purely critical reasons, the fact that he wavers, and cannot justify to himself the dismissal of the book, tells rather in its favour.

Cyril of Jerusalem definitely omits the Apocalypse from his list of the canonical books of the New Testament; but he gives no reason for the omission, and does not hesitate to employ some of its language. The tendency however which is displayed by him, having been started doubtless by Dionysius, persisted and developed in the church of the East, and found formal expression in the omission of the Apocalypse from the Canon, as defined by the Council of Laodicea.

On examining these criticisms of the book (which date from the end of the second century), the following points will be noted. (1) They are all subjective in character; they claim no external authority; they are based upon the objections which are felt by the reader, and may disappear on closer investigation. (2) They are prompted, at least in most cases, by *a priori* objections to the supposed teaching of the book. A burning question in the third century was connected with the Millennial reign of the saints. Was it in heaven or on earth? Was it to be conceived under spiritual, or under material, conditions? Now, the Apocalypse of John was understood to support very strongly one side of this controversy, and some at least of those who attacked it had cause to wish it removed on this ground. (3) With every inducement to produce such a tradition, if they knew of its existence, not one of these early critics of the Apocalypse asserted that it was written by 'John the Presbyter'; and yet taken together they represent a wide area of the church, within which we should certainly expect to find such a tradition if it existed. (4) Later investigation has added nothing to the internal objections against the Johannine authorship as urged, for example, by Dionysius. The assertion of the Christian consciousness, that this is an inspired and apostolic work, has really no more difficulty to meet in this respect now than it had when it made the assertion good in the fifth century.

The situation seems, therefore, to be this. The apostolic authorship and canonical authority of the Apocalypse were generally accepted, and went unchallenged, until towards the end of the second century. Then contrary views began to make their appearance. But when the evidence, direct and indirect, on either side, is weighed in respect of its date, its quantity, its quality, its freedom from bias, the external evidence in favour of the Johannine authorship, as commonly understood, outweighs the other at every point.

There is, however, one theory of the authorship which diverts a considerable proportion of this evidence (all, in fact, which does not directly assert the apostolic authorship) from the traditional view, and applies it in a new direction. And as this theory has found considerable favour of late, it must be stated and examined. It is, in a word, that our Apocalypse was written, not by John the Apostle, but by another John, his contemporary, and himself a dweller in Asia Minor, and known as 'John the Presbyter.' This theory has for its sole historical basis a sentence of Papias, and the inference drawn from it by Eusebius, in combination with Dionysius' story about the two tombs at Ephesus. Papias, in giving an account of his habit of inquiring of all he met who had known 'the Presbyters' (or Elders) as to what they said, seems to draw a distinction between 'what Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord said,' and 'what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say.' From this it is inferred: (1) That he knew of two 'disciples of the Lord,' both named John; that the one who, being mentioned along with others of the Twelve, may be assumed to be the son of Zebedee, belonged already to the past, while the other, the Presbyter, was still in life; (2) that the Presbyter lived in Asia Minor, where of course Papias' bishopric of Hierapolis was situated; (3) that the two tombs which were reported to be pointed out at Ephesus were not monuments to the same John, but tombs or monuments of the Apostle and the Presbyter; (4) that the conjecture of Dionysius is correct, and that the Apocalypse, which he found so difficult to trace to the same hand that wrote the Gospel, was written by the second John.

The earlier upholders of this theory, like Bleek, Düsterdieck, and Ewald, held that both Johns dwelt either contemporaneously or successively at Ephesus; but a later development rejects wholly the tradition of the Apostle's living and dying there, makes the Presbyter the sole outstanding bearer of the name in that Christian community, and in fact ascribes to him not only the Apocalypse, but also the Fourth Gospel. The arguments for the theory in this form have been worked out with great fullness by Bousset in the Introduction to his *Commentary*.

It will be seen that this theory of the authorship, could it be established, would not seriously affect the authority of the Apocalypse, while, as regards the Gospel, it represents a distinct step of return towards the traditional view, inasmuch as it finds the author of both books among the personal disciples of Jesus, and indeed in that disciple who enjoyed his closest friendship. From this point of view the church need not hesitate to accept the theory, if it could be proved. But to me it seems unproved by the arguments, and disproved by the necessary inferences. Granting the first inference from the statements of Papias, it only serves to establish, so far as his authority will serve, the existence of a second John who, like the first, was a 'disciple of the Lord.' The inference that he lived in Asia is a good deal to build upon the fact that Papias refers to the things he 'says.' Thus the monuments at Ephesus rest only on a vague tradition, and are capable of several explanations besides that of Eusebius; and, in fact, Bousset very properly denies any weight at all to the inference from this tradition. But if it cannot be proved that there were two men of great influence in Asia in the second half of the first century, both called John, there is really no reason why the one John who certainly played a great part there should be the Presbyter rather than the Apostle.

And while the theory has not been proved, it involves very considerable difficulties, while the difficulty which it was originally adduced (by Dionysius) to meet has practically disappeared. We no longer feel constrained, by the apparent differences between the Gospel and the Apocalypse, to seek for a second John to make him the author of the Apocalypse. The tendency of late is rather to recognize the same influence, if not the same hand, at work in both. Bousset, who is of this opinion, admits that the Gospel bears signs of having been written or transmitted by the disciple 'whom Jesus loved'—who leaned on his breast at the Supper; but in face of the Synoptic declaration that Jesus sat down to that Supper, 'and the twelve apostles with him,' it is very difficult to see how this disciple could be any other than one of the Twelve. It is no serious objection that Irenæus does not give the title of 'apostle' to the John whose authority he ranks so highly. In this he does not differ from Papias, who mentions several of the Twelve, and describes them, not as 'apostles,' but as 'disciples of the Lord.' And Irenæus all but gives the title directly to John when he speaks of 'John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles.'

But the greatest difficulty which is raised by this theory is that it postulates the entire disappearance of John the Presbyter from the memory of the church of the second century. It assumes that this John was so great a personality that he could write these Letters to the churches of Asia, and require no further introduction or credentials beyond his bare name, and yet that by the middle of the second century he was forgotten; that apart from the Apocalypse, or the Apocalypse and the Gospel, he did and said nothing which found record either in the memory or in the literature of the early church, while his authorship of these was made over to another man[1].

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[1] The attempt to pray in aid the evidence of Papias through Georgios Hamartolos to the effect that John the Apostle perished early at the hands of the Jews is rightly dismissed, e.g. by B. Weiss (*Einleitung*, p. 364, and note). The tradition that John lived until the time of Trajan 'is in itself thoroughly trustworthy, and

There is probably a better case to be made out from this theory than from any other which challenges the traditional view, and yet the proof is inadequate, and the difficulties it raises too great for it to carry conviction. And the view which does justice in the simplest way to all the facts is still the one expressed by Justin Martyr, that the Apocalypse was written by John the Apostle.

6. CONNEXION WITH THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

It is not unfair to point out that nearly all, if not all, the attempts which have been made to find an author for the Apocalypse, other than John the Evangelist, have been due to a desire either to safeguard the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, or to discredit it. This motive proceeds, in the one case, on the conviction that the two cannot have the same author; in the other, on the conviction that whoever wrote the one wrote the other. The latter was certainly the opinion of the early church, and though it has been strenuously denied and thought to be disproved, it is the opinion which is once more in the ascendant now. The *Alogi* who rejected 'all the writings of John' did so for reasons connected with the Gospel, but they rejected the Apocalypse too—a striking indication of the relation between the two books as recognized at the close of the second century. Reference has already been made to the work of Hippolytus, which treated of the Gospel and the Apocalypse together, and to the direct statement of Origen that John 'who lay on Jesus' breast' left behind him a gospel and wrote the Apocalypse. These writers, and the church which they represented, must have been as fully conscious as we can be of all the internal reasons which suggest separate authorship for the two books. These reasons may be classified as connected with the general character and

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at any rate has not been shaken by the latest attempts to imagine for him an early death.'

contents of the respective books, the attitude of the writer to the readers, and the language both as to grammar and as to vocabulary—in each of which features a wide divergence can be felt between the one work and the other. But the difference can be accounted for in every particular, except the last, by the totally different subject and purpose of either book, involving different circles of ideas, different modes of expression, different attitudes of the writer's mind; no two classes of literature could, in fact, be more widely separated than the two to which these works respectively belong—a gospel and an apocalypse, history and prophecy, prose narrative and poetic symbolism. But the differences under the last head are much more difficult to account for; they can be felt by all, and are especially impressed on those who study the Revelation in Greek. For its Greek is like no other Greek with which we are acquainted. It reads like the work of one who was not so much ignorant of, as indifferent to, the grammatical rules of the language. In not a few passages the writer seems to have been thinking in Hebrew while he wrote in Greek. But when full weight has been given to all the phenomena of this class, there are others, no less striking, which serve to connect the diction of the Apocalypse with that of the other Johannine books.

It will be possible here to indicate these correspondences only in the most general way. For details the student may refer to the Appendix to Bousset's Introduction. As is there remarked: 'It is incomparably more important to observe that, along with all the difference, there is yet at the same time a certain remarkable correspondence, especially in the choice of imagery and in vocabulary.' The most striking instance is, of course, the fact that in the Apocalypse alone, of New Testament books, except the Fourth Gospel, the name, 'the Word of God' is applied to Christ (xix. 13). But besides this we find in the same two books alone Christ described as 'the

Lamb'; the Apocalypse, it is true, gives the word in another, the diminutive, form, but the correspondence is none the less striking. The image of 'living water,' 'water of life,' is common to Gospel and Apocalypse (John iv. 10, vii. 38; Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 17); so also the symbol of the Shepherd, applied to Christ (John x. 1, 27, 28, xxi. 16; Rev. vii. 17).

Similar correspondence is found in the common predilection of the Gospel and the Apocalypse for certain words either in their usual or in some special sense. Thus the word translated 'true' (Rev. iii. 7, &c.) is used once by Luke, once by Paul, three times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but nine times in the Gospel of John, four times in the First Epistle, and ten times in the Revelation. The phrase, 'he that overcometh,' so common in Revelation, is another link with the Fourth Gospel (xvi. 33) and the First Epistle (ii. 13, 14, iv. 4, v. 4, 5). The construction of the object after the words 'to hear' varies in Revelation (contrary to the established rule), and varies in like manner in the Fourth Gospel. There are other correspondences, some of which will be pointed out in the Commentary, such as the repeated occurrence of the words 'keep,' 'witness,' 'testimony,' and the frequency with which the thoughts arrange themselves in groups of three (i. 4, 5, 6, 9, &c.). In fact, the more closely we study the book, the more numerous do such correspondences appear. Their presence and their significance are recognized by most modern critics. The explanation given by some, that they are due to the hand of 'the latest editor,' is hardly compatible with the way in which we find them embedded in the very texture of the whole book: and though the possibility of some other explanation cannot be denied, yet, in view of the strong external testimony to a common authorship, it seems most in accordance with all the facts to hold that the Apocalypse, as we have it, and the Fourth Gospel, come directly or indirectly from the same source.

7. THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

In regard to the date of the Apocalypse, we have what is probably a unique phenomenon in New Testament criticism, namely, that the tendency of many modern scholars has been to assign the book to a date considerably *earlier* than that fixed by tradition. It has been dated as early as the reign of Nero (e.g. by Bruston), and by many, including our English scholars, Lightfoot, and Westcott, in the period immediately preceding the Fall of Jerusalem[1]. Others, like Weiss and Düsterdieck, place it in the reign of Vespasian, and probably *after* the Fall of Jerusalem[2].

All those who maintain a date for the Apocalypse earlier than A.D. 90, do so on the ground of internal evidence alone, and of some particular interpretation of various historical allusions, and in face of external evidence which is unusually strong and definite. The external evidence in favour of the end of the reign of Domitian begins with Irenæus, and is practically unanimous. Irenæus (Bishop of Lyons in A.D. 177) says of the vision of the Apocalypse that 'it was seen not a long time ago, but almost in our own generation at the end of the reign of Domitian.' The reign of Domitian extended from A.D. 81 to 96. Clement of Alexandria remarks that John returned from his flight (or exile) to the island of Patmos 'on the death of the emperor'; and he was understood by Eusebius to refer to the Emperor Domitian. This is evidence which cannot be lightly set aside; and the external evidence to the contrary is of comparatively little weight. Epiphanius indeed fixes the return of John from Patmos 'in the time of the Emperor Claudius' (A.D. 41–54); but as in the same passage he speaks of the Apostle 'in the time of his old age, after ninety years of life,' we must either presume that he made a mistake as to the reign, or that he represents John as thirty-three years older than our Lord, and a man of sixty-three when he became an apostle. Theophylact and Tertullian, who are sometimes cited in favour of an early date, do not really throw light on the question. The primitive tradition is 'constant and unswerving' that John's exile took place, and the Apocalypse was written, towards the end of the reign of Domitian.

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[1] So Baur, Hase, Reuss, Hilgenfeld, and Beyschlag. See Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 360 f.: 'the Apocalypse winds up the Apostle's career in the church of the Circumcision; the Gospel and the Epistles are the crowning result of a long residence in the heart of Gentile Christendom.'

[2] So Mr. Vernon Bartlet in *The Apostolic Age*, p. 404: 'instead of 95 A.D. some date like 75–80 becomes more likely.'

Those who maintain the earlier date (under Galba or Vespasian), rely on their interpretation of internal evidence; and this is in part indefinite and in part conflicting, according to the interpretation which is adopted. It may be grouped under four heads: the general condition of the Asian churches as reflected in the book; the special character of the persecution to which they had been, and were about to be, exposed; the reference to the temple; and the inferences that may be drawn from the enumeration of the emperors as the 'heads' of the Beast.

The situation of the Asian churches, as it is reflected in this book, has to be examined alike externally and internally. Externally, in its relation with the world, the church is seen as one which has emerged from at least one persecution, and is rapidly approaching another more widespread, more searching, and more violent than had been felt before. The persecution or persecutions through which it had already passed, had claimed victims, such as Antipas, from the local churches, and others probably from a wider field, whose voices are heard from below the altar. But it is nowhere suggested that the number of martyrs in the Asian churches had yet been great. The reference to Antipas (though it is a mistake to interpret it as though he were the sole victim) is best understood if such cases were still individually memorable through their rarity. Rome is represented as already 'drunk with the blood of the saints.' The persecution has been sanguinary at Rome; spasmodic as yet in the province of Asia. This seems to point to a date after the Neronian massacre in A. D. 64, and before the general persecution under Domitian in A.D. 95. During this period, as Mommsen says, 'The persecution of the Christians was a standing matter, as was that of robbers.' But it was not an organized attempt to eradicate them.

But attention must also be given to any indications of the special ground on which the accusation and persecution of these Asian Christians was based. It is mainly because of his reading of these indications that Professor W. M. Ramsay gives the weight of his great authority to the late (and traditional) date of the Apocalypse. He maintains that the Christians who appear in the book as having suffered, or about to suffer, suffer as witnesses to the Name, or the word of God, 'which implies that their death springs directly from their acknowledgement of their religion, and not from conviction, even on false evidence, for specific crimes.' But this prosecution 'for the Name' marks the second stage of the church's relation to the state, the first being characterized by prosecution under charges of definite crimes—immoralities, and the like. But the argument is somewhat precarious, owing to the indefiniteness of the allusions in the Apocalypse on which it is based (ii. 13, vi. 9, xii. 11, xvii. 6). There is, it is true, no reference to accusation of crime, but on the other hand only one, and that an indirect, allusion to the Name as a test of discipleship; and the 'testimony of Jesus' signifies rather the revelation given by Christ than witness borne to his Name. It is, moreover, hardly possible to say at what point in the century the one process gave way to the other. Probably they overlapped; and in two contemporary documents (as it might be, Apocalypse and 1 Peter) we might find one form of accusation prominent in the mind of one writer, and the other in that of the other.

The same dubiety attaches to another criterion of the same kind—the degree to which the worship of the emperor had become the normal test applied to one accused of being a Christian. The Apocalypse itself does not contain any indubitable reference to such a practice, and this confirms at least its first-century origin. But it does represent this emperor-worship as the form in which the diabolical hostility of the world to the church took shape, as the ever-present alternative to the worship of Christ, and as the snare and pit into which weak Christians were likely to fall. This also points towards the latter end of the century; but again it is a question of degree. The worship of 'Rome and Augustus,' with religious homage to the statue of the emperor, was no new thing, even in the middle of the century. Augustus had permitted the city of Pergamum to erect a temple in his honour so early as B.C. 29. And the fashion spread rapidly, especially in the eastern provinces; not only Domitian, but Caligula, fifty years before him, had insisted on his right to be honoured as 'Deus ac Dominus.' The status of emperor-worship as disclosed in the Apocalypse, though it favours the later date, is not inconsistent with the reign of Vespasian.

When we turn to consider the internal condition of the Asian churches, as indicated especially in the Seven Letters, our inference from what we observe will be largely subjective. We see Christian communities which, with at most one exception, had already laid themselves open to the sharp remonstrances of the Spirit. One had 'left its first love'; another, though it had 'a Name to live,' was dead; a third was eaten up with worldliness. Heresy and false teaching were present in most of them, tolerated in some, resisted not unsuccessfully by others. And it was not only the 'false teachers' of a transcended Judaism who infested these churches, as they had done those of Galatia, for example; there were also doctrines and practices in which we cannot but see at least the germs of Gnostic heresy. Men were enticed from the simplicity of the gospel and the purity of Christian life towards a 'knowledge (*gnosis*) falsely so called,' fantastic speculations on 'deep things' of the world's origin, and God's nature, and forbidden trafficking with the powers of evil. To some it will seem that a degeneracy so widespread and so serious must have required the lapse of half a century to take place, since first the gospel had been joyfully accepted by these peoples; to others—bearing in mind the proverbial 'fickleness' of the Asian character, its proneness to religious excitement, and superstition, and the historical case of the Galatians who 'so quickly' removed unto 'a different gospel'—it will appear that twenty years is not too short a period to allow for this process.

Passing from general conditions to particular allusions, there are two of special importance to which many have appealed for a decisive answer as to the date. The first of these is found in the reference to Jerusalem and the temple in xi. 1 ff. (also to the twelve tribes in vii. 4-8; but see Commentary). It is argued that these must have been in existence when the book was written, and the date is therefore fixed before A. D. 70. The force of the argument, however, depends on two assumptions: first, that it is the literal and material city which is referred to, and, second, that this section is the original composition of the author. If these assumptions be correct, and the book be a unity, we could have no doubt that it was written before A. D. 70. But neither of them is established, and one at least is very doubtful. The view taken in this Commentary is that the vision of xi. 1 ff. did originally refer to the actual city, but that it is part of the material (extra-canonical, in this case) which John incorporated in his book. We are then free to suppose that he made this use of an earlier prediction at any time *after* the fall of the city, giving to it in all probability an interpretation consistent with the new situation, connecting it with the spiritual city or people of God[1]. If this be the explanation of the passage, its incorporation may have taken place at any time in the last third of the century, with a slight probability in favour of the earlier part of it, when the contrast between the earthly temple and the spiritual church would be at once more poignant and more instructive.

The other specific references to historical events are found in the two passages in which the heads and horns of the Beast are described and enumerated (xiii. 1–3 and xvii. 7–12). It is now generally accepted that, by these 'heads,' we are to understand successive emperors of Rome, and by the 'wounded head' (xiii. 3) whose death-stroke is healed, as also by the beast that 'was, and is not, and shall come' (xvii. 8), the Emperor Nero, reported dead, but believed to be alive and expected to return[2]. With these fixed points it might be supposed to be easy to ascertain in which reign the author of these passages wrote. But even among those who start from them there is the widest possible divergence of opinion. This arises from two points of uncertainty: viz. From which of the Roman rulers does the list commence—from Julius Cæsar, or from Augustus—and are the brief reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, to be reckoned? From chap. xiii it appears that the writer anticipated a series of seven emperors ('heads'), one of whom after receiving a death-stroke was to be healed; from chap. xvii that five of these emperors had fallen, and the writer, who was writing in the reign of the sixth, anticipated a short reign of the seventh, to be followed by an eighth, who was also 'of the seven.' The two passages, therefore, correspond in predicting seven rulers of Rome, and one of them suggests that the author lived and wrote under the sixth. Now according as we reckon or omit the three 'pretenders,' whose reigns Suetonius describes as 'rebellio trium principum,' we arrive at Galba or Vespasian as the sixth (commencing with Augustus). If we begin with Julius Cæsar, we arrive at Nero. But all other indications are strongly against the reigns of either Nero or Galba. Hence we should conclude that the reckoning begins with Augustus, omits the 'pretenders,' and points to Vespasian as the ruler who was on the throne. And if from that standpoint John predicted a short reign for his successor (Titus), and the accession of a 'second Nero' to the throne (an eighth who was of the seven), his prediction was verified by history.

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[1] The contrast may be illustrated from John ii. 19–21, where the Jews think that Christ is referring to the material temple, 'but he spoke of the temple of his body.'

[2] See below, p. 56 ff.

It is true that most commentators who adopt this interpretation in general see the reference to the emperors in chap. xiii in the 'horns' (ten) which have the diadems, and not in the 'heads' (seven). Of the seven heads they have no satisfactory explanation to give. Bousset says frankly that in this picture the heads have no longer any significance at all, and supposes that they have been simply taken over from older tradition. But this is too summary. In the passage in Daniel (vii. 6, 7), from which the imagery is derived, one creature has ten horns and the other four heads. For one creature with ten horns and seven heads there is no apocalyptic precedent; and even were there one unknown to us, there was no need for the Seer, who is dealing freely with his material, to take over a feature which had no meaning for his own prophecy. On the contrary, he employs the traditional imagery of horns and heads, but he deliberately adjusts the numbers to convey his own meaning. This is further indicated by the distinctive attributes which he assigns to the horns and the heads. The horns have diadems, the heads have 'names of blasphemy.' Towards the one the writer is neutral; on the other he passes judgement.

So far from the heads being a conventional and meaningless addition, it is on them rather than on the horns that the emphasis falls. The simplest explanation is one which I have not yet seen suggested, viz. that here as elsewhere the Apocalyptist represents, by different figures, the same persons in different aspects. The ten horns with diadems are the first ten rulers of the Roman empire, *including* Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who at least claimed imperial sway. The seven heads with the 'names of blasphemy' are the first seven rulers, *excluding* the three who, though styled 'emperors' by their soldiers, did not reign long enough to have temples consecrated to their names and statues erected for their worship. The seventh head is identical with the tenth horn; both signify Titus.

To this explanation there is one obvious objection, namely, that in the second passage (xvii. 12) the ten horns of the scarlet-coloured Beast are explained as representing 'ten kings which have received no authority as yet.' These are commonly understood to refer to the Parthian rulers with whom the returning Nero was to ally himself. But the objection is not so serious as at first would appear. It is quite in accordance with the method of the book to use the same image in two distinct visions to represent different ideas. And there is no greater difficulty in making the horns, in the one case, represent Roman emperors, and in the other, Parthian rulers, than there is (with Bousset and others) in making the horns in the one case, and the heads in the other, represent emperors, and the heads in the first case represent nothing at all.

If our interpretation of these passages be correct, we have in them a very clear indication of the reign in which they were written. And with this, there is, as we have seen, nothing in the internal evidence of the book seriously to conflict. There remains, of course, the external evidence strongly in favour of the later date. But even Irenæus was removed by fifty years from the time of which he was speaking, and if we wished to account for his making a mistake of twenty years in his chronology, an explanation might be found in the natural disposition to connect the exile of John with a widespread persecution and a notorious persecutor.

The solution which would most closely fit all the conditions of the problem (maintaining, as we are compelled to do, the unity of the book) would be, that it was composed in the reign of Vespasian, and reissued, with additions by the same hand, after the death of Domitian. If, however, it was written both by the same hand and at the same time, the probability is strong that it was written in the reign of Vespasian, after the Fall of Jerusalem, about the year A. D. 77.

8. THE LEGEND OF THE RETURNING NERO.

Reference has already been made to the fact that some of the most mysterious language of the Apocalypse finds its explanation in a strange legend regarding the Emperor Nero. Nero died by his own hand in an obscure house, four miles from Rome, in June, A. D. 68. A few months later a rumour sprang up that he was not dead. 'About the same time,' says Tacitus, 'Greece and Asia were greatly alarmed by a false report that Nero was about to come, there having been various reports about his death, so that many pretended he was alive, and even believed it[1].' At first, the story ran that he was somewhere in hiding; then it was asserted that he had fled to the Parthians, and would return thence supported by their armies. Suetonius relates that the emperor had himself spoken of such a flight, and also that it had been prophesied that he would become king of the East, and set up his throne in Jerusalem. The legend was strong enough to induce more than one pretender to give himself out as 'Nero,' and one of them at least was recognized by the Parthian king. The expectation was especially strong and widespread in Asia Minor, as is shewn by two passages in the Sibylline Oracles, written by a Jew in Asia Minor soon after the eruption of Vesuvius. Thus (iv. 137): 'There shall come towards the West the rising strife of war, and the fugitive from Rome lifting his mighty lance, passing over the Euphrates with tens of thousands.' The fifth book of the Sibyllines also contains several prophecies which centre round this prediction, and also have points of contact with the Apocalypse. Nero is not named, but he is described (v. 143 ff., 361 ff.) in all his cruelty and ruthlessness; and his return is connected with a prediction of the destruction of Babylon, and also of the rebuilding of Jerusalem[1].

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[1] Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 8; cf. Suetonius, *Nero*, 57.

Towards the end of the century, when it was no longer probable that Nero was alive, the expectation of his return underwent the modification that he was to return from the underworld. In the eighth book of the Sibyllines, dating from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he has become a ghostly, supernatural figure, and is described as a wild monster, leaving behind him a dark track of blood.

It is one of the points in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, on which most modern scholars are agreed, that in this legend of 'Nero redivivus' we are to find the explanation of the 'wounded head' of xiii. 3, and of 'the beast that was, and is not, and shall come' in xvii. 11. The Antichrist is to be, at all points, a hellish parody of the Christ. As the church looked for, and prayed for, the return of the one, so her foes were to await the return or resurrection of the other; and the climax of the world-conflict was to take the shape of a struggle between the two, at the head of their respective armies. But, ere this stage was reached, Nero was to be an instrument of the Divine judgement upon Babylon-Rome, returning with Parthian hordes at his back to take vengeance on the city which had cast off his yoke. This identification of Nero with Antichrist is not difficult to understand, in view of his character, his treatment of the Christians, and his position as a typical representative, the last in fact, of that royal line which had claimed for itself throughout the empire Divine honours and the worship of its subjects.

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[1] See Bousset, *Offenbarung Johannis*, pp. 419, 475 ff.

The interpretation of the 'number of the Beast' is so readily adapted to almost every conceivable personality, that it is only to be appealed to by way of confirmation. But when so many other features point in the same direction, it is noteworthy that this problem also meets its simplest solution, if we see in 666 a cryptogram for the name and title of the emperor in Hebrew, *Neron Kaisar*; for this, and this alone, explains at the same time the various reading attested by Irenæus, 616—a number which is arrived at by dropping the last letter of *Neron*, and adopting the more usual spelling 'Nero.'

9. THE UNITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The difficulty of finding a satisfactory explanation of the Apocalypse as a whole, combined with the difficulties of harmonizing the various internal indications of date and authorship, has led to attempts being made to cut these knots by denying that the book, as we have it, belongs to one date, and proceeds from one man. The earliest of these attempts belongs to the beginning of the nineteenth century, but these were so completely driven off the field that, down to 1882, the unity of the book was regarded as established. At that time, however, the idea was revived by Völter, and in the next fifteen years a large number of German scholars (e. g. Vischer, Weizsäcker, Weyland, Pfleiderer, Spitta) followed his example, and propounded various schemes for apportioning the work to different sources and different editors. Of these critical theories we may select three as typical, represented by Völter, Weyland, and Weizsäcker.

(1) Völter accounts for the Apocalypse in its present form by a theory of *expansion*. He assumes that its original foundation was a Jewish apocalypse, written before the Fall of Jerusalem, which has grown by successive additions, through different forms (four or five in all) to this final one, which is not earlier than the time of Hadrian. For such a process there are, indeed, parallels in contemporary literature, such as the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs*, but they, at least, shew the marks of their various rescensions in a manner which is wholly absent from the Apocalypse of John, with its marked uniformity of highly characteristic style and diction. And when Völter has reconstructed the original foundation, by removing the work of subsequent hands, 'one asks oneself in wonder what could be the purpose or intrinsic meaning of the apocalyptic torso which is left. The alleged foundation gives indeed an impression of unity, but at the cost of cutting out everything that is characteristic and living, and offering a vast apocalyptic machinery (chaps. iv–xi) to produce the meagre conclusion of xiv. 14–20[1].'

(2) The group of theories of which Weyland's may be taken as typical has this in common, that the Apocalypse is traced to a number of sources, some Jewish and some Christian, more or less loosely held together in a merely mechanical union, through links which have been supplied by one who acted rather as editor than as author.

Once more a parallel can be found in the supposed construction of other apocalyptic works such as Enoch, Ezra, and Baruch. In different forms of this theory the work of the Christian editor (or editors) varies in quantity; but in no case is it so considerable as to entitle him to the consideration of 'author.' And, as Bousset points out, they one and all give way before the indisputable uniformity of the book, as a whole, in language and style.

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[1] Bousset, *Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 151.

'If it were the case that in the Apocalypse we have "sources" brought into connexion in a wholly mechanical fashion, then certainly it must be possible to shew the existence of differences of diction to a quite distinguishable extent between the several sections. But, on the contrary, we find in the different parts of the Apocalypse an astonishing uniformity, down to the minutest particulars in the use of language, in style, in grammatical peculiarities, and in individual, unique terms of expression.' The evidence is to be found only in a somewhat minute study of the original text; and for this it must suffice here to refer the reader to the seventh section of Bousset's *Introduction* to his Commentary.

(3) The third group of theories on the literary origin of the Apocalypse may be represented by that of Weizsäcker (compare also Sabatier and Schoen). These account for the presence of sections in the Apocalypse, more or less numerous, which appear to destroy its plan or affect its unity, by suggesting that the writer quoted more or less freely from extra-canonical books which were current in his time. In its most moderate form, as exemplified, for instance, by Schoen, such a theory does not really impinge upon the 'unity' of the Apocalypse. Indeed, it provides—what no other theory yet suggested seems to secure—a way of maintaining the unity of the book against all attempts to dismember it, by explaining in the simplest way the presence of those elements on which the extreme critics have fastened as evidence of divergent originals.

It is, therefore, no infringement of our belief of the unity of the book, or of its apostolic authorship, if we are prepared to admit that there are in it some passages which the apostolic author quoted from earlier literature of the same class. Such a procedure would be quite in keeping with the practice of other writers of Scripture, especially the prophets of the Old Testament[1]. And there is strong probability for the suggestion that John employs such material, in the indubitable habit of his mind revealed by his use of the canonical books of the Old Testament. It has been already pointed out how large a proportion of the thought, and even of the language, of the Apocalypse is based upon reminiscence of the Old Testament. And besides the direct quotations, there is probably an equal amount of less direct allusions to the same sources. It is plain that the visions in Patmos were granted to a mind which was saturated with the ideas, the language, and the symbolism of the later prophets; and if, in their literary form, the visions came to be clothed so largely in traditional conceptions, derived from the Old Testament, there is all the more probability that they would borrow some of their material from the apocalyptic literature with which also the Jewish mind was so deeply impregnated. And if in the course of the book we find three or four passages which bear all the marks of a Jewish origin, in which what is specifically Christian is easily separable, and best accounted for as pointing the Christian application the writer was giving to an old prophecy, we have not only a new light cast upon the dark places of the Apocalypse, but we have therein a means of defence against those who would dismember it, and an opportunity of restoring it to the comprehension of the ordinary reader.

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[1] For an exhaustive analysis of these unacknowledged quota-

Opinions will vary as to the number of passages which should be thus marked as quotations. Those about which there seems the clearest evidence are three in number, and there are two others which might also be included. The arguments for the Jewish origin of vii. 4–8 (with which verses 1–3 ought probably to be included) will be found in the notes on the text. And while we could not have a better illustration of the connexion between what

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tions in the Old Testament see Canon Girdlestone's useful book, *Deuterographs.*

John had in his mind as reminiscence, and what he received through inspiration, we are also saved the necessity of adopting any of the expedients by which commentators have sought either to identify the 144,000 with the innumerable multitude, or to explain the one and the other, if they are distinct.

In xi. 1–13 we have another passage which bears many traces of having come originally from a Jewish source. It breaks the series of the Trumpets which is interrupted from ix. 21 to xi. 14. It presents the Seer, for the first time, as active rather than passive in the revelation, engaging like the prophets of the Old Testament in a symbolical action, as though he were rather the cynosure of the public eye than the describer of visions seen in solitude. It certainly seems to assume that the temple is still in existence, to overlook our Lord's prophecy concerning its approaching destruction, and to ignore his instruction to his disciples that they should abandon Jerusalem when they saw 'the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not.' It specially emphasizes the connexion of the 'two witnesses' with the times of the end, a feature which has a marked significance in Jewish apocalyptic; and it focusses expectation on what was to precede the coming of the Messiah rather than on the return of Christ, and this although the central figure of the book is the Lamb that had been slain. All these considerations make it extremely probable that the Apostle incorporates here a quotation from a Jewish apocalypse in which he saw a Christian value. The one phrase (8^b) which is specifically Christian puts it beyond doubt that he understood the 'city' in a literal sense as the Jerusalem he had known.

The arguments for tracing chap. xii—the vision of the Woman, the Man-child, and the Dragon—to a similar origin are indicated in the notes to that passage. But we cannot agree with those who would extend the quotation to include also chap. xiii. Rather are these two chapters related to each other in the same manner as the two parts of chap. vii. The earlier, which is quoted and adapted, becomes the foundation for the later, and provides at once introduction and imagery for the vision of the Christian Seer. In the former, in its original form, the Messiah is not yet born; neither his experience nor his function is that of the Messianic Figure as revealed, interpreted, and exemplified by Christ. But the Apostle saw that the prophecy was capable of a Christian application, and had in fact points of connexion with actual experiences and words of our Lord. These he indicated and emphasized by phrases and verses which are very easily distinguishable from the original of which he makes use.

There are two other passages for which reasons can be urged that they should be traced to a similar source, viz. chap. xviii—the Oracle on Babylon, reminiscent, not only in detail but as a whole, of the Old Testament prophets—and chap. xiii—the vision of the Beast and his Prophet. It has not, however, appeared to me necessary to adopt this view in regard to either of these passages. The second of them, in particular, seems to find its most satisfactory explanation in the Cæsar-worship which pressed with especial severity on the Christian church, and with increasing severity as the century advanced. The source of the imagery is doubtless to be traced in the Old Testament, and particularly in Daniel, but there is no sufficient reason for seeing a Jewish origin for the passage.

The recognition of three passages, therefore, as probably quotations from extra-canonical literature is supported, in each case, by internal evidence, and also by the plainly distinguishable habit of the writer's mind; and while in no sense impinging on the real unity of authorship, it removes the most serious difficulties which have been urged against it.

10. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

The immediate purpose of the Apocalypse is plainly stamped upon it from first to last. It was intended to strengthen and encourage the faith of the church in special circumstances of severe strain and impending persecution. The strain was due, in general, to the tarrying of our Lord in his expected return, which even those looked to see who had seen him go; and, in particular, to the external pressure and internal degeneration which had been the recent experience of the churches of Western Asia. The Christian communities both at Smyrna and at Philadelphia had suffered much through the hostility and intrigues of the Jewish population (ii. 9 f., iii. 8 f.). At Pergamum the pressure from without seems to have culminated, probably through the predominant position assigned to that city in the worship of the emperor. The church there had suffered unto blood. Antipas was probably only one of several who had died 'for the testimony of Jesus.' And the experience of Pergamum was typical of the situation to which its sister churches were equally exposed, and, in fact, all the churches over a much wider area. Rome was already intoxicated with the blood of the saints and 'martyrs of Jesus' (xvii. 6); her destined fall is understood to be the act of God avenging 'His holy apostles and prophets' (xviii. 20). The terrible persecution which marked the closing year of Nero's reign, though it was apparently confined to Rome and its neighbourhood, had not only reverberated through all the churches of Christ; it had inaugurated a policy of attack upon the Christians, and set the seal of imperial favour upon all attempts to suppress the new sect. Though there does not appear to have been any organized persecution directed against Christians everywhere before the time of Domitian, nevertheless many individuals in many places were called upon to suffer martyrdom at the instigation of Jewish hatred or private malice. Many already were the martyr-souls gathered below the heavenly altar (vi. 9, 10), from whom the cry went up, 'How long, O Lord, dost thou not avenge our blood?' And instead of the Divine avenging it seemed as if only a time of greater suffering were at hand. All the signs of the times pointed to a fiercer and more organized persecution. The Roman state was claiming more and more insistently religious reverence from its subjects. Religion was to be identified with patriotism. Personified or incarnate in the figure of its emperor, the state demanded not only obedience but worship. Temples of Rome and the reigning emperor sprang up in every city of importance. To each of them was attached a guild or order of priests who were interested promoters of the new cult (xiii. 11–17). Refusal to pay homage to the sacred statue of the emperor was in itself an act of treason, a sin against the state; and zealous governors approved themselves as such by stringent search for those who were likely to refuse. It was no longer necessary to lay specific criminal charges against Christians, and to bring them home to them; the acknowledgement of the name of Christian or of Christ, the refusal to worship the image of the emperor was sufficient. Their enemies needed no longer to wait for a general persecution; it was enough for any one to lay an information against any individual, and he would be haled before a magistrate and compelled either to suffer or to recant.

At the same time the internal condition of the churches was such as greatly to intensify the strain on the faithful followers of Jesus, and to give ground for the dread lest they should not be able to withstand the coming storm. The love of many had grown cold; the spirit of worldliness had made havoc; heresy that touched the springs of moral life, heresy that was indeed soul-destroying, had appeared in several quarters, and in some had gone unchecked. Life both for the individual Christian and for the Christian community was at such a time essentially a struggle, a struggle of great intensity and pathos to maintain purity of faith and life, with the ever-impending possibility of being called to a life and death struggle in the grasp of merciless cruelty.

The situation, therefore, was one which called for just such a book as this, to the faithful a summons to endurance and promise of early release, to the unfaithful a reproach and a warning, tender or stern according to the degree of their unfaithfulness, and upon the unbelieving and hostile world a denunciation of Divine wrath to come, which became in turn an assurance of speedy succour and deliverance to those who kept the testimony of Jesus.

The object of the book, therefore, is to nerve the trembling faith of the Asian churches in the first place, and through these of the whole church, to face the strain of the present, and the probable agony of the immediate future, in the triumphant assurance that 'the time is at hand,' the final judgement of God upon evil, and the return of Christ for salvation to his people. And this object is accomplished in part by the searching exhortations and the reassuring promises conveyed in the Seven Letters, and in part by the prediction of the course of events yet to intervene before the final consummation of victory and peace. These events are characterized by a continuous intensification of the fierceness of the conflict, due to the interposition, plain to the eye of faith, of 'principalities and powers' of wickedness on the one side and of God Himself on the other. The series of preliminary judgements, more than once repeated, have upon the workers of iniquity only the effect which the plagues of Egypt produced upon Pharaoh. They avail only to harden their hearts (ix. 20, 21), and to increase their fury against the people of God. Nevertheless the issue of the conflict is beyond doubt. For it has been already waged and brought to an end 'in heaven' (xii. 7, 8). The dragon, the great serpent, the author of all evil, has been cast out; if he continues the struggle upon earth, it is as a beaten foe, and only for a brief and firmly limited period. Nevertheless, just because it is his final effort he is making, it involves the climax of wickedness and oppression upon earth. It is he that 'gives power' to the imperial monster of Roman power (xiii. 4), and he in turn at once deputes his power to (xiii. 12), and is supported by (xiii. 15), the third monster, who is identified with the false prophet (xix. 20), and probably represents the priestly guild entrusted with the duty of propagating and maintaining the blasphemous worship of the emperor. The whole force and horror of these evil powers is envisaged with the utmost clearness, but only in order to make more emphatic, more convincing, the assurance, which is the message of the book, that their time is short, that the armies of God are already in motion against them, that the fierce conflict towards which all things are hastening will issue in the manifestation of the supremacy of righteousness.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOOK.

When once the great purpose and the supreme message of the book have been clearly grasped, the general lines of its construction are not difficult to make out. On the other hand, it is, and probably will always be, extremely difficult to fit all the parts and details into any continuous interpretation of the future. The book is not a prediction of future history in narrative form so much as the description of a series of visions, which deal with the events before the end, but are not easy to correlate with one another.

Three points bearing on its construction seem to be clear. First, there is no chronology, in our sense of the word, in the book. There is, indeed, no room for it, and from a Christian point of view there is no right to expect it. The writer of this book would be at issue with most of the other writers in the New Testament if he placed the expected end outside his own generation. Paul had thought that some would be still alive when the Lord came. Peter, almost in the words of this Apocalypse, assures his readers that 'the end of all things is at hand.' The generation who had known the apostles grew wearied of waiting, as one after another 'fell asleep,' and began to cry 'where is the promise of his coming?' The writer of the Apocalypse replies that 'the time is at hand' (i. 3, xxii. 10); the things he describes are those which 'must shortly come to pass' (i. 1, xxii. 6); he hears the Lord himself saying, 'Behold, I come quickly' (xxii. 7, 12, 20). And though we have learnt to see that the *form* in which the primitive church looked for that return was not realized as they expected, but that Christ has come again in his abiding Spirit, that he has come and comes in every *crisis* or judgement-manifestation in the affairs of men, and believe that he is still to come, 'the second time unto salvation,' we must not allow the understanding into which we have been led by the Spirit to make us misunderstand the thought of the second generation of believers. For them this horizon of time was the horizon of their own time, and there was no room for an elaborate chronology of the future. The periods which are referred to, the 'three days and a half' (xi. 9), 'the 1260 days' (xii. 6), the 'forty and two months' (xiii. 5), even the 'thousand years' (xx. 4), are all conventional symbols, whose meaning lies not in the numbers themselves, but in the ideas with which they were traditionally associated. A little examination of the use of such figures in apocalyptic literature will shew that, while seven and ten and its multiples are traditional symbols of completeness, and stand for the periods of Divine activity or rule, the 'time and times and half a time,' of which 'the 1260 days' and the 'forty and two months' are simply transliterations, symbolize the converse of completeness, its antithesis, the broken period, the activity or rule of Antichristian power.

Such calculations as have been so commonly based on the fancied chronology of the Apocalypse are not only alien from its true interpretation; they are precluded by the principle laid down by our Lord himself and recognized within this book. The time of the end is a secret reserved in the mind of the Most High alone: 'of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.' This was clearly recognized by the early church, in whose understanding it was firmly fixed that 'the day of the Lord' would come 'as a thief' (Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 10). The perpetually-recurring admonition to watchfulness would have had no meaning had it been possible to extort from Scripture the secret of the date of the end.

Secondly, we have to recognize the character of the progression of events in the unveiling of the penultimate future. There have been two ways of regarding this progression. Some interpreters have sought to trace it in a straight line, the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Book, for example, representing series of events which are to succeed one another in time, and lead on by three connected stages to the Judgement and End of all things. Others, seeing the difficulty of thus relating the series, each of which appears to reach a climax immediately preceding the end, and the still greater difficulty of bringing other parts of the book into this direct line, have adopted the theory of 'Recapitulation,' assuming that the successive series of visions set forth, in different forms, the same series of events, and thus explaining the apparent climax to which each leads as immediately preceding the end. Each of these systems is involved in its own difficulties, and the truth probably lies between them, in the recognition that the line of progression is neither straight nor circular, but spiral. It is like upward progress round a circular mountain, in which each complete circle finds the traveller at a point above that from which he started, a point also from which he can behold the peak. Each series of judgements completes one circle, but also brings the Seer to a point from which he sees the end. But the end is not yet, and he starts on another sweep of outlook upon coming judgements, to arrive again at the point whence the end seems almost at hand. Thus the method of progression answers to what has been often observed in history, viz. that from time to time a cycle of human wickedness seems to have run its course, a harvest of Divine judgement has been reaped, and men hold their breath in expectation of the end; but 'the end is not yet,' and another cycle commences; judgement indeed has fallen, but the final judgement is still to come—only it is nearer.

A third point to be recognized is that, though the visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Book, followed by the visions of the returning Christ, his victory and reign, and the new Jerusalem, seem to give a systematic groundwork to the whole, this scheme is broken at several points by the introduction of other material which serves the writer's purpose in various ways, but destroys the symmetry of the scheme. Thus between the first and the seventh Seals is inserted the 'consolatory vision' of the seventh chapter; between the sixth and the seventh Trumpets the explanatory and consolatory visions of chaps. x, xi. 13; between the Trumpets and the Book the long section chaps. xii–xiv, in which xii is itself introductory to xiii. The probable origin of these sections has been referred to above (§ 9).

John records in this book the visions he had seen in Patmos, but he does more. The visions become the starting-point of his prophetic activity. Probably he has left his isle of banishment before he commits to writing what had been given him to see. And as he weaves together his record, he weaves in other things—the fruit of his own meditation on his experience, fragments and echoes of Old Testament prophecy and apocalypse, and, it may be, fragments of other apocalypses which were precious in his sight. It is impossible, and it is unnecessary, to distinguish what he had actually seen from the thoughts and memories and predictions which he wrought into the record of his visions. He had seen a picture or pictures of infinite wonder; he had heard the voice of Christ commanding him to write not only 'the things which thou hast seen,' but also 'the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.' He was at once describer and interpreter of his visions, delineator of the situation of the world as seen *sub specie aeternitatis* and prophet of the things that 'must shortly come to pass.' Under the form of an Apocalypse he spoke as a prophet.

12. THEOLOGY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The most striking fact in regard to the theology of the book is the position therein assigned to the Lord Jesus, the recognition of his Divine glory and of his redeeming work. In the eyes of the writer he indeed is the true author of the book. He is its centre, and at every point is seen exalted in supreme authority over human affairs.

Indications are not wanting of the writer's familiarity with the historical Jesus. He frequently uses the name which specially marks his human nature (i. 9, xii. 17, xxii. 16, &c.); he describes him as 'of the tribe of Judah,' and the house of David; he refers to his death at Jerusalem (xi. 8), to his resurrection (i. 5, 18), and to his exaltation to the Father's throne (iii. 21, and, indirectly, xii. 5). He alludes to the Twelve Apostles (xxi. 14), and echoes more than one of the recorded sayings of Jesus.

But for him the Jesus whom he had 'known in the flesh' is lost in the glory of the exalted Lord. He is 'the Lord of lords, and King of kings' (xvii. 14, xix. 16). His existence reaches back to before the beginning of things created; himself the principle from which all creation issues (iii. 14), he is the absolutely Living One, by whom it can be said, as God alone can say, 'I am the first and the last' (cf. Isa. xliv. 6). To him, therefore, is committed the unfolding of the book of human destiny, the waging of the final conflict with evil, the holding of the Divine assize. All these functions which men had been taught to recognize as absolute prerogatives of the Divine, John lays simply upon Christ. And not these only, which belong to the future, but those attributes which had been displayed in earlier revelation as the peculiar property of the Most High are similarly assigned to Jesus Christ. In the opening vision of the book the Apostle takes one after another of those phrases which had been consecrated from old times to the description of the Most High God, those attributes in which by prophet and psalmist he had been apparelled, and applies them to Christ as though they were recognized to be his by right. The description of the 'Ancient of Days' in Daniel is transferred to him. He holds the keys of Hades and of death. He searches the hearts of men. He shares in the Divine honour paid to God: even angels join in worshipping 'God and the Lamb' (v. 11).

This complete and unhesitating acknowledgement of the Divine Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ is the more remarkable when we give due weight to the intense Hebraism of the writer. A Jew of the Jews, his mind saturated in Hebrew literature, both canonical and extra-canonical, a true son of the race to which Monotheism had become a passion, and the ascription of Divine honour to any other than God a horror and a blasphemy, John nevertheless sets Jesus side by side with the Almighty. One meaning of this phenomenon is plain. It is the most convincing proof of the impression made by Jesus upon his disciples, one which had been sufficient to revolutionize their most cherished religious belief; for them he had the value of God. And were the authenticity or credibility of our gospel records to be undermined, this fact would remain; and we should require to construct something similar to the gospel story to account for it. Indeed, in so far as the attempt to destroy the authority of the gospel is due to a desire to remove the miraculous from the person and character of Jesus, it seems condemned to futility, in view of this nothing less than miraculous result of the impression made by his personality upon his contemporaries.

But it is not only the Person of Christ which is so highly exalted in the Apocalypse; his work in the redemption of man, by the sacrifice of himself, is also one of the dominant ideas of the book. This is most characteristically exhibited in the title of 'the Lamb,' which recurs so often as the designation of Christ. And it is no mere title, but a description of our Lord in the special aspect of his relation to men which is revealed in his death upon the cross—as is manifest from passages like vii. 14, 'These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' and the Hymn of Praise to the Lamb (v. 9), 'Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests.' Here too it is said of Christ that he 'loveth us, and loosed (or, washed) us from our sins by his blood'; it is as a Lamb that Christ takes his place in the centre of the heavenly host; to him belongs the book of life wherein are written the names of the redeemed; and he is at once the light and the temple of the new Jerusalem. It may be doubted whether even in the New Testament there is a phrase which leads more directly to the heart of the atonement than the description of our Lord as 'the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world.'[1]

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[1] On the theology of the Apocalypse see especially Stevens, *New Testament Theology*, and T. B. Strong in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iii. p. 690 ff.

It is this which gives the Apocalypse its place at the close and climax of the New Testament, this which gives it its place in the hearts of Christ's disciples. It describes, as no other book does, the glory of our ascended Lord, and the triumphant issue of his conflict with evil; the pictures which it draws of heaven and those that dwell there, of the new life where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,' commend themselves to the Christian heart, not alone for their intrinsic beauty, but because Christ is so plainly set forth as the Lord of that life, and his sacrifice as the way by which men attain unto it.

GUIDES TO STUDY

The best preparation for closer study of the Revelation is the careful perusal of the relative articles in HASTINGS' *Dictionary of the Bible*, e.g. 'Apocalyptic Literature,' 'Revelation,' 'Parousia,' 'Angels,' 'Eschatology of the Apocalyptic Literature,' 'John, Apostle,' 'Millennium,' 'Man of Sin,' &c.

Articles on the same subjects in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* may also be consulted, and HARNACK's 'Apocalyptic Literature,' and 'Millennium,' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Of Commentators proper the safest guide in English is still ALFORD in his *Greek Testament*.

Of Expositors :—

MILLIGAN, *Expositor's Bible*; *Lectures on the Apocalypse*; *Discussions on the Apocalypse*.
MONRO GIBSON, *Apocalyptic Sketches*.

Among foreign scholars this volume owes much and most to BOUSSET, the author of the last edition of Meyer's *Commentary*.

To this should be added :—

SCHOEN, *L'Origine de l'Apocalypse*.
SPITTA, *Offenbarung Johannis*.
HOLTZMANN, *Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament*.
WEISS (B.), *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*.
GUNKEL, *Schöpfung und Chaos*.
BOUSSET, *Der Antichrist*.
HÜHN, *Die Messianischen Weissagungen*.

ANALYSIS OF THE APOCALYPSE

i. 1–8. The superscription and address.
Superscription or expanded title (1–3).
Address or salutation, rising into an ascription of praise (4–8).

i. 9–20. Prologue. The vision of the Son of Man.
The Seer and his circumstances (9, 10).
The voice and vision of the Son of Man (11–16).
Commission to write (17–20).

ii—iii. The Letters to the Seven Churches.
Ephesus (ii. 1–7), Smyrna (8–11), Pergamum (12–17), Thyatira (18–29), Sardis (iii. 1–6), Philadelphia (7–13), Laodicea (14–22).

iv—v. The vision of eternal realities in heaven.
iv. The glory of the Creator.

v. The glory of the Redeemer.

The Sealed Book (1–5), the Lamb (6–8), the praise of the Lamb (9–14).

vi—(vii)—viii. 1. The Seven Seals.
The first (vi. 1–2), second (3, 4), third (5, 6), fourth (7, 8), fifth (9–11), sixth (12–17), seventh (viii. 1).

> [**vii. First parenthesis: vision of the redeemed.**
> The sealed of the House of Israel, vii. 1–8.
> The redeemed of all peoples, vii. 9–17.]

viii. 2—(x—xi. 13)—xi. 19. The Seven Trumpets.
Preparation (viii. 2–6), the first (7), second (8, 9), third (10, 11), fourth (12, 13), fifth (ix. 1–12), sixth (13–21), seventh (xi. 14–19).

> [**x—xi. 13. Second parenthesis.**
>
> x. An angel communicates future prophecies through a 'little book.'
>
> xi. 1–13. Two ancient prophecies touching the temple and the two witnesses.]

[**xii—xiv. Third parenthesis: visions of the opposing forces.**

xii. Vision of the Woman, the Man-child, and the Dragon.

xiii. Vision of the First Monster (1–10), and the Second Monster, the False Prophet (11–18).

xiv. Vision of the Lamb on Mount Sion (1–5), proclamation of judgement and salvation (6–13), vision of the Son of Man in power (14–20).]

xv—xvi. The Seven Bowls.

Preparation (xv. 1—xvi. 1), the first (2), second (3), third (4–7), fourth (8, 9), fifth (10, 11), sixth (12–16), seventh (17–21).

xvii—xix. 10. Vision of the great harlot (Babylon-Rome) and her destruction.

xvii. Vision of the Woman (1–6), interpretation of the symbols (7–18).

xviii. Triumph-song over Babylon.

xix. 1–10. The Hallelujahs in heaven, announcement of the Bride.

xix. 11—xx. Vision of the returning and victorious Christ.

xix. 11–16. The returning Christ.

xix. 17–21. Destruction of both the First and the Second Monsters.

xx. The binding of Satan (1–3), the 'first resurrection' and 'Millennium' (4–6), final conflict (7–10), final judgement and resurrection (11–15).

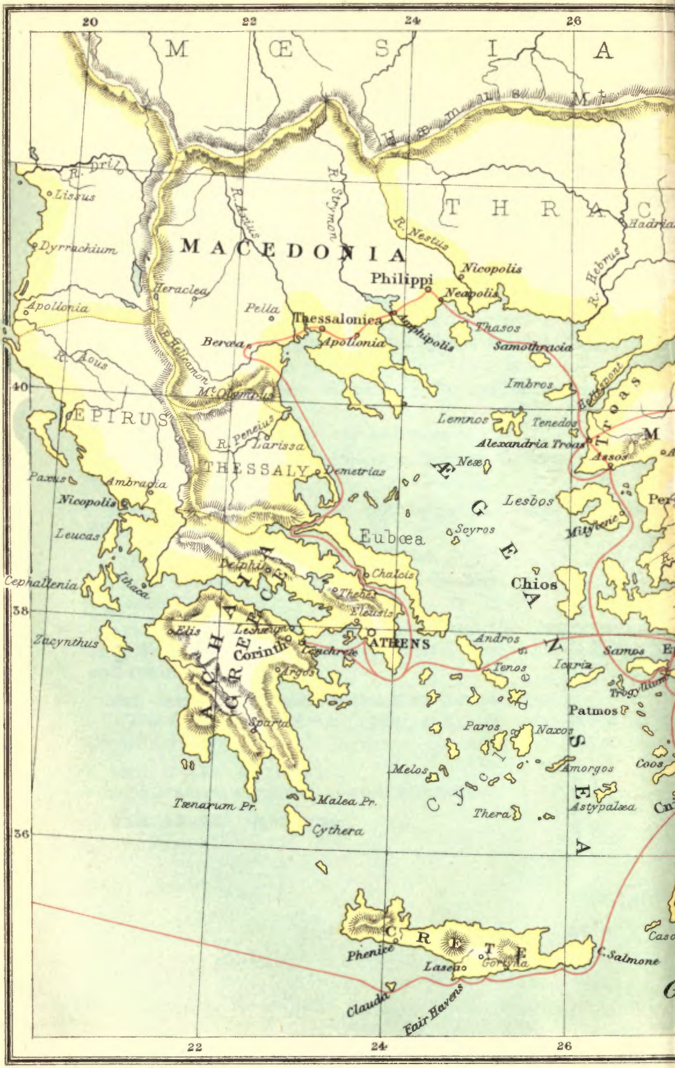
xxi—xxii. 5. Vision of the New Jerusalem.

The Holy City from afar (xxi. 1–8), the same more fully described (9—xxii. 5).

xxii. 6–17. Conclusion.

Warnings, admonition, and assurances.

xxii. 18–21. Epilogue.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Heraclea
Apollonia
R. Axius
R. Strymon
R. Nestus
R. Hebrus
Hadriar
Nicopolis
Philippi
Neapolis
Pella
Thessalonica
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Berœa
Thasos
Samothracia
R. Aous
R. Haliacmon
Mt Olympus
Imbros
Hellespont
Troas
40
EPIRUS
R. Peneius
Larissa
THESSALY
Demetrias
Lemnos
Tenedos
Alexandria Troas
Assos
Neæ
Paxus
Ambracia
Nicopolis
Lesbos
Mitylene
AEGEAN SEA
Leucas
Eubœa
Scyros
Delphi
Chalcis
Chios
Cephallenia
Ithaca
Thebes
Eleusis
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Elis
Lechæum
ACHAIA
GREECE
Corinth
Cenchreæ
ATHENS
Andros
Zacynthus
Tenos
Icaria
Samos
Argos
Trogyllium
Patmos
Sparta
Paros
Naxos
Cyclades
Amorgos
Melos
Coos
Tænarum Pr.
Malea Pr.
Thera
Astypalæa
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Cythera
CRETE
Phenice
Lasea
Gortyna
C. Salmone
Clauda
Fair Havens
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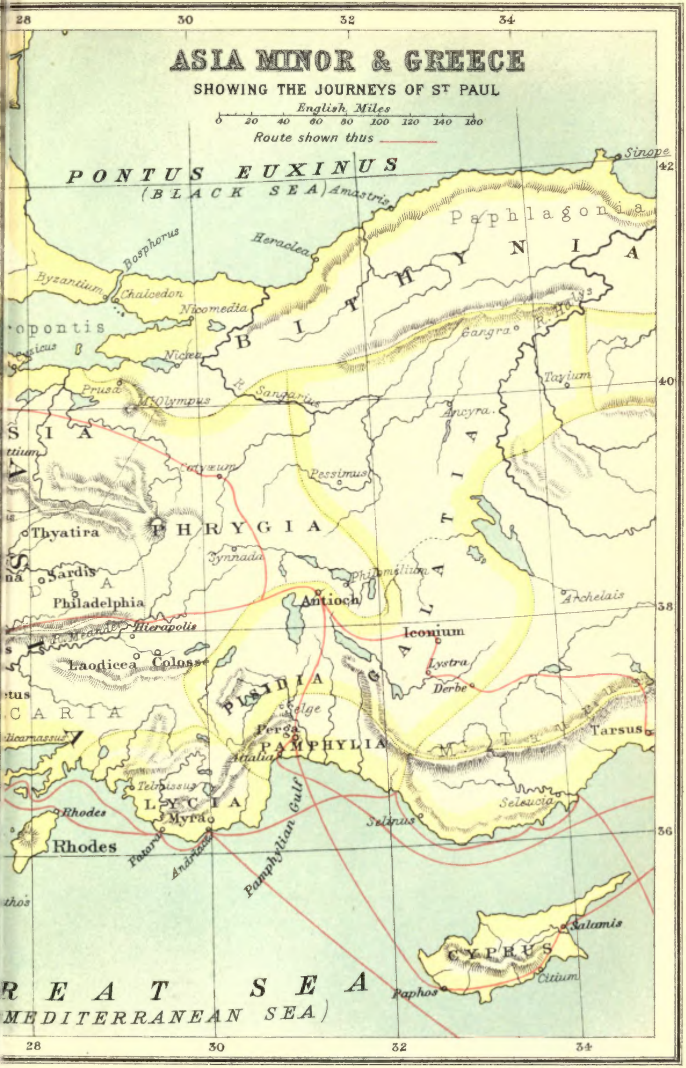

ASIA MINOR & GREECE

SHOWING THE JOURNEYS OF ST PAUL

English Miles

Route shown thus

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PONTUS EUXINUS
(BLACK SEA)
Sinope
Amastris
Paphlagonia
Heraclea
BITHYNIA
Bosphorus
Byzantium
Chalcedon
Nicomedia
opontis
Nicea
Prusa
Mt Olympus
R. Sangarius
R. Halys
Gangra
Tavium
Ancyra
GALATIA
SIA
Cotyæum
Pessinus
PHRYGIA
Thyatira
Synnada
Philomelium
Sardis
LYDIA
Philadelphia
Antioch
Archelais
Hierapolis
R. Meander
Iconium
Laodicea
Colossæ
Lystra
Derbe
PISIDIA
CARIA
Selge
Perga
PAMPHYLIA
Tarsus
M. TAURUS
Attalia
Telmissus
LYCIA
Myra
Rhodes
Rhodes
Patara
Andriaca
Pamphylian Gulf
Selinus
Seleucia
Salamis
CYPRUS
Citium
Paphos
GREAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN SEA)

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THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

AUTHORIZED VERSION

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

Chap. 1

Source, channel, and subject of Apocalypse.

1 THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave
unto him, to shew unto his servants things which
must shortly come to pass; and he sent and
signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:
2 who bare record of the word of God, and of the
testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that
3 he saw. Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that
hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those
things which are written therein: for the time *is*
at hand.

Salutation and doxology.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia:
Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is,
and which was, and which is to come; and from
5 the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and
from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and*
the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of
the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us,
and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
6 and hath made us kings and priests unto God
and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for
7 ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with
clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also*
which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth

Chap. 1 shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the 8
ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was,
and which is to come, the Almighty.

Vision of the Son of Man. I John, who also am your brother, and com- 9
panion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and
patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is
called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the
testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on 10
the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great
voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and 11
Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou
seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven
churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and
unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto
Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia,
and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the 12
voice that spake with me. And being turned,
I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the 13
midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the
Son of man, clothed with a garment down to
the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden
girdle. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like 14
wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a
flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as 15
if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the
sound of many waters. And he had in his right 16
hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went
a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance
was as the sun shineth in his strength. And 17
when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.
And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto
me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: *I am* 18

Chap. 1

he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of
19 hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things
20 which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Letters to the Seven Churches: Ephesus.

2 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the
2 seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and
3 hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured,
4 and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy
5 first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except
6 thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.
7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Smyrna.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last,

Chap. 2 which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, 9
and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)
and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they
are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of
Satan. Fear none of those things which thou 10
shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of
you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall
have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto
death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He 11
that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith
unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not
be hurt of the second death.

Pergamum. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos 12
write; These things saith he which hath the sharp
sword with two edges; I know thy works, and 13
where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*:
and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not
denied my faith, even in those days wherein
Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain
among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have 14
a few things against thee, because thou hast
there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who
taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the
children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto
idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou 15
also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes,
which thing I hate. Repent; or else 16
I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight
against them with the sword of my mouth. He 17
that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith
unto the churches; To him that overcometh will
I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give
him a white stone, and in the stone a new name

written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

Chap. 2

Thyatira.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet
19 *are* like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.
20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat
21 things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented
22 not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribula-
23 tion, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every
24 one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will
25 put upon you none other burden. But that which
26 ye have *already* hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end,
27 to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even
28 as I received of my Father. And I will give him
29 the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Chap. 3

Sardis.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis 3
write; These things saith he that hath the
seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know
thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest,
and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the 2
things which remain, that are ready to die: for I
have not found thy works perfect before God.
Remember therefore how thou hast received and 3
heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore
thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a
thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will
come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in 4
Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and
they shall walk with me in white: for they are
worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be 5
clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out
his name out of the book of life, but I will confess
his name before my Father, and before his angels.
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit 6
saith unto the churches.

Philadelphia.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia 7
write; These things saith he that is holy, he that
is true, he that hath the key of David, he that
openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and
no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I 8
have set before thee an open door, and no man
can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and
hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.
Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of 9
Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but
do lie; behold, I will make them to come and
worship before thy feet, and to know that I have
loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of 10

my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. **Chap. 3**
11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou
12 hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.
13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the **Laodicea.**
Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the
15 creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or
16 hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my
17 mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I
18 counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine
19 eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous
20 therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup

Chap. 3

with him, and he with me. To him that over- 21
cometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne,
even as I also overcame, and am set down with
my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let 22
him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The glory of the Creator.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* 4
opened in heaven: and the first voice which I
heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with
me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew
thee things which must be hereafter. And im- 2
mediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a
throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the
throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a 3
jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rain-
bow round about the throne, in sight like unto an
emerald. And round about the throne *were* four and 4
twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and
twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment;
and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And 5
out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunder-
ings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of
fire burning before the throne, which are the seven
Spirits of God. And before the throne *there was* 6
a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst
of the throne, and round about the throne, *were*
four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And 7
the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second
beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face
as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying
eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six 8
wings about *him;* and *they were* full of eyes
within: and they rest not day and night, saying,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was,

Chap. 4

9 and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat
10 on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the
11 throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The Book with Seven Seals.

5 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back-
2 side, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals
3 thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the
4 book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to
5 read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven
6 seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the
7 earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

The praise of the Lamb.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and

Chap. 5

golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers
of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, 9
Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open
the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed
us to God by thy blood out of every
kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and 10
hast made us unto our God kings and priests:
and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, 11
and I heard the voice of many angels round about
the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the
number of them was ten thousand times ten
thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying 12
with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was
slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
And every creature which is in heaven, and on 13
the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in
the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,
Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be*
unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto
the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts 14
said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell
down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and
ever.

Opening of Seven Seals.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the **6**
seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder,
one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.
And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he 2
that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was
given unto him: and he went forth conquering,
and to conquer. And when he had opened the 3
second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come
and see. And there went out another horse *that* 4

was red: and *power* was given to him that sat
thereon to take peace from the earth, and that
they should kill one another: and there was given
5 unto him a great sword. And when he had
opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say,
Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black
horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of
6 balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in
the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of
wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley
for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the
7 wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal,
I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come
8 and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse:
and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell
followed with him. And power was given unto
them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with
sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with
9 the beasts of the earth. And when he had
opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the
souls of them that were slain for the word of God,
10 and for the testimony which they held: and they
cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord,
holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our
11 blood on them that dwell on the earth? And
white robes were given unto every one of them;
and it was said unto them, that they should rest
yet for a little season, until their fellowservants
also and their brethren, that should be killed as
12 they *were*, should be fulfilled. And I beheld
when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there
was a great earthquake; and the sun became
black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became

Chap. 6

as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the 13
earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs,
when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the 14
heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled
together; and every mountain and island were
moved out of their places. And the kings of the 15
earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and
the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every
bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in
the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and 16
said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and
hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the
throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the 17
great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be
able to stand?

Angel of the Winds.

And after these things I saw four angels standing 7
on the four corners of the earth, holding the four
winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow
on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.
And I saw another angel ascending from the east, 2
having the seal of the living God: and he cried
with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it
was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 3
Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,
till we have sealed the servants of our God in
their foreheads. And I heard the number of them 4
which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an
hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the
tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of 5
Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe
of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the
tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of 6
the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand.

Number of the sealed.

Of the tribe of Nepthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed
7 twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of
8 Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

Great multitude of the redeemed.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with
10 white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the
11 Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and
12 worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever
13 and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?
14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Chap. 7

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any 16
more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor
any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of 17
the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them
unto living fountains of waters: and God shall
wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Seventh Seal. Preparation for trumpets.

And when he had opened the seventh seal, 8
there was silence in heaven about the space of
half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which 2
stood before God; and to them were given seven
trumpets. And another angel came and stood at 3
the altar, having a golden censer; and there was
given unto him much incense, that he should offer
it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden
altar which was before the throne. And the 4
smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers
of the saints, ascended up before God out of the
angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and 5
filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the
earth: and there were voices, and thunderings,
and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the 6
seven angels which had the seven trumpets
prepared themselves to sound.

Blowing of the trumpets.

The first angel sounded, and there followed 7
hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were
cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees
was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.
And the second angel sounded, and as it were a 8
great mountain burning with fire was cast into the
sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;
and the third part of the creatures which were in 9
the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of
the ships were destroyed. And the third angel 10

sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven,
burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the
third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of
11 waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood:
and the third part of the waters became
wormwood; and many men died of the waters,
12 because they were made bitter. And the fourth
angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was
smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the
third part of the stars; so as the third part of
them was darkened, and the day shone not for
13 a third part of it, and the night likewise. And
I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the
midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe,
woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason
of the other voices of the trumpet of the three
angels, which are yet to sound!

Fifth trumpet

9 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star
fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him
2 was given the key of the bottomless pit. And
he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose
a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great
furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by
3 reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came
out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto
them was given power, as the scorpions of the
4 earth have power. And it was commanded them
that they should not hurt the grass of the earth,
neither any green thing, neither any tree; but
only those men which have not the seal of God in
5 their foreheads. And to them it was given that
they should not kill them, but that they should be
tormented five months: and their torment *was* as

the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a
man. And in those days shall men seek death, and 6
shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and
death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the 7
locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle;
and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like
gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men
And they had hair as the hair of women, and their 8
teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. And they had 9
breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and
the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of
chariots of many horses running to battle. And 10
they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were
stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt
men five months. And they had a king over 11
them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit,
whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon,
but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.
One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two 12
woes more hereafter.

Sixth trumpet.

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a 13
voice from the four horns of the golden altar which
is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had 14
the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are
bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four 15
angels were loosed, which were prepared for an
hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to
slay the third part of men. And the number of 16
the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand
thousand: and I heard the number of them.
And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them 17
that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and
of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the

horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their
18 mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By
these three was the third part of men killed, by
the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone,
19 which issued out of their mouths. For their
power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for
their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads,
20 and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the
men which were not killed by these plagues yet
repented not of the works of their hands, that they
should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and
silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which
21 neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither
repented they of their murders, nor of their
sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their
thefts.

The angel with the Little Book.

10 And I saw another mighty angel come down
from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow
was upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the
2 sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in
his hand a little book open: and he set his right
foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,
3 and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion
roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders
4 uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders
had uttered their voices, I was about to
write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying
unto me, Seal up those things which the seven
5 thunders uttered, and write them not. And the
angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon
6 the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware
by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created
heaven, and the things that therein are, and the

Chap. 10

earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of 7 the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And the 8 voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went 9 unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I 10 took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again 11 before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Measuring of the temple.

11 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without 2 the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months. And 3 I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the 4 two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will 5 hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and

The Two witnesses.

Chap. 11

devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.
6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.
7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome
8 them, and kill them. And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord
9 was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer
10 their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented
11 them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies be-
13 held them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Seventh trumpet.

14 The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third
15 woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel

Chap. 11

sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four 16
and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God 17
Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, 18
and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was 19
opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The Woman, the Man-child, and the Dragon.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; **12**
a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, 2
travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; 3
and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the 4
stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a 5

man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod **Chap. 12**
of iron: and her child was caught up unto God,
6 and *to* his throne. And the woman fled into the
wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of
God, that they should feed her there a thousand
two hundred *and* threescore days.

War in heaven.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his
angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon
8 fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither
9 was their place found any more in heaven. And
the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent,
called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the
whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and
10 his angels were cast out with him. And I heard
a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God,
and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of
our brethren is cast down, which accused them
11 before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the
word of their testimony; and they loved not their
12 lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens,
and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters
of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come
down unto you, having great wrath, because he
knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Wrath of the Dragon.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto
the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought
14 forth the man *child*. And to the woman were
given two wings of a great eagle, that she might
fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she
is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,
15 from the face of the serpent. And the serpent

Chap. 12 cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the
woman, that he might cause her to be carried
away of the flood. And the earth helped the 16
woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and
swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast
out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with 17
the woman, and went to make war with the remnant
of her seed, which keep the commandments of
God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The First Monster.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw 13
a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads
and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns,
and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.
And the beast which I saw was like unto a 2
leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear,
and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the
dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and
great authority. And I saw one of his heads as 3
it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound
was healed: and all the world wondered after the
beast. And they worshipped the dragon which 4
gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped
the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast?
who is able to make war with him? And there 5
was given unto him a mouth speaking great
things and blasphemies; and power was given unto
him to continue forty *and* two months. And he 6
opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to
blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them
that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him 7
to make war with the saints, and to overcome
them: and power was given him over all kindreds,
and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell 8

Chap. 13

upon the earth shall worship him, whose names
are not written in the book of life of the Lamb
9 slain from the foundation of the world. If any
10 man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth
into captivity shall go into captivity: he that
killeth with the sword must be killed with the
sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the
saints.

The Second Monster.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of
the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and
12 he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the
power of the first beast before him, and causeth
the earth and them which dwell therein to worship
the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.
13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh
fire come down from heaven on the earth in the
14 sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on
the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he
had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying
to them that dwell on the earth, that they should
make an image to the beast, which had the wound
15 by a sword, and did live. And he had power to
give life unto the image of the beast, that the
image of the beast should both speak, and cause
that as many as would not worship the image of
16 the beast should be killed. And he causeth all,
both small and great, rich and poor, free and
bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in
17 their foreheads: and that no man might buy or
sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the
18 beast, or the number of his name. Here is
wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count
the number of the beast: for it is the number of

Chap. 13 a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

The Lamb and his armies. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 14
And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 2
and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 3
These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 4
And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. 5

Proclamation of salvation and judgement. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 6
saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 7
And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 8
And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the 9

Chap. 14

beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his
10 forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of
the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out
without mixture into the cup of his indignation;
and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone
in the presence of the holy angels, and in the
11 presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their
torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they
have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast
and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark
12 of his name. Here is the patience of the saints:
here *are* they that keep the commandments of
13 God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice
from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are*
the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their
14 labours; and their works do follow them. And
I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the
cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on
his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp
15 sickle. And another angel came out of the
temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat
on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for
the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest
of the earth is ripe.

The Son of God in power.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle
17 on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And
another angel came out of the temple which is in
18 heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And
another angel came out from the altar, which had
power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to
him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in
thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the

Chap. 14 vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.
And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, 19
and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it*
into the great winepress of the wrath of God.
And the winepress was trodden without the city, 20
and blood came out of the winepress, even unto
the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and*
six hundred furlongs.

Preparation for the Bowls.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and 15
marvellous, seven angels having the seven last
plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.
And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with 2
fire: and them that had gotten the victory over
the beast, and over his image, and over his mark,
and over the number of his name, stand on the
sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they 3
sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and
the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous
are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just
and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints. Who 4
shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?
for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come
and worship before thee; for thy judgments are
made manifest. And after that I looked, and, 5
behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony
in heaven was opened: and the seven 6
angels came out of the temple, having the seven
plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and
having their breasts girded with golden girdles.
And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven 7
angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God,
who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple 8
was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and

from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. **Chap. 15**

Pouring of the Bowls.

16 And I heard a great voice out of the temple
saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and
pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the
2 earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial
upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and
grievous sore upon the men which had the mark
of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped
3 his image. And the second angel poured out his
vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of
a dead *man:* and every living soul died in the sea.
4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the
rivers and fountains of waters; and they became
5 blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say,
Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast,
6 and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For
they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they
7 are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar
say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and right-
8 eous *are* thy judgments. And the fourth angel
poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was
9 given unto him to scorch men with fire. And
men were scorched with great heat, and blas-
phemed the name of God, which hath power over
these plagues: and they repented not to give him
10 glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon
the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full
of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for
11 pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because
of their pains and their sores, and repented not of

Chap. 16

their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his 12
vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water
thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of
the east might be prepared. And I saw three 13
unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of
the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast,
and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For 14
they are the spirits of devils, working miracles,
which go forth unto the kings of the earth
and of the whole world, to gather them to the
battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, 15
I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth,
and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked,
and they see his shame. And he gathered them 16
together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue
Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out 17
his vial into the air; and there came a great voice
out of the temple of heaven, from the throne,
saying, It is done. And there were voices, and 18
thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great
earthquake, such as was not since men were upon
the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.
And the great city was divided into three parts, 19
and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon
came in remembrance before God, to give unto
her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of
his wrath. And every island fled away, and the 20
mountains were not found. And there fell upon 21
men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about
the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God
because of the plague of the hail; for the plague
thereof was exceeding great.

The Seventh Bowl.

And there came one of the seven angels which **17**

Babylon the great harlot.

had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying
unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the
judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon
2 many waters: with whom the kings of the earth
have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of
the earth have been made drunk with the wine
3 of her fornication. So he carried me away in
the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman
sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names
of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet
colour, and decked with gold and precious stones
and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full
of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
5 and upon her forehead *was* a name written,
MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER
OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of
the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of
Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great
admiration.

Meaning of the vision: Babylon is Rome.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst
thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the
woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which
8 hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast
that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend
out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition:
and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder,
whose names were not written in the book of life
from the foundation of the world, when they
behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The
seven heads are seven mountains, on which the

Chap. 17

woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five 10
are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet
come; and when he cometh, he must continue a
short space. And the beast that was, and is not, 11
even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and
goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which 12
thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no
kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one
hour with the beast. These have one mind, and 13
shall give their power and strength unto the beast.
These shall make war with the Lamb, and the 14
Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of
lords, and King of kings: and they that are with
him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful. And 15
he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest,
where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes,
and nations, and tongues. And the ten 16
horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these
shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate
and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her
with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to 17
fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom
unto the beast, until the words of God shall be
fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is 18
that great city, which reigneth over the kings of
the earth.

Triumph-song over Babylon.

And after these things I saw another angel **18**
come down from heaven, having great power; and
the earth was lightened with his glory. And he 2
cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon
the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the
habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul
spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful

3 bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of
the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the
earth have committed fornication with her, and
the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through
4 the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard
another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of
her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her
5 sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For
her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath
6 remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as
she rewarded you, and double unto her double
according to her works: in the cup which she
7 hath filled fill to her double. How much she
hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so
much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith
in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and
8 shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues
come in one day, death, and mourning, and
famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire:
9 for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her. And
the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail
her, and lament for her, when they shall see the
10 smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the
fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great
city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is
11 thy judgment come. And the merchants of the
earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man
12 buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and
of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and
scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels
of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious

Chap. 18
wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and 13
cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and
wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and
chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the 14
fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from
thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly
are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them
no more at all. The merchants of these things, 15
which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off
for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,
and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was 16
clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and
decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!
For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. 17
And every shipmaster, and all the company in
ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea,
stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke 18
of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this
great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and 19
cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that
great city, wherein were made rich all that had
ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in
one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, 20
thou heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets;
for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty 21
angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and
cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence
shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and
shall be found no more at all. And the voice of 22
harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and
no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be

found any more in thee; and the sound of a mill-
23 stone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and
the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in
thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the
bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for
thy merchants were the great men of the earth;
24 for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And
in her was found the blood of prophets, and of
saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Praises of heaven: approach of the Bride.

19 And after these things I heard a great voice of
much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salva-
tion, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the
2 Lord our God: for true and righteous *are* his
judgments: for he hath judged the great whore,
which did corrupt the earth with her fornication,
and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her
3 hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her
4 smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four
and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down
and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying,
5 Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the
throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants,
6 and ye that fear him, both small and great. And
I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude,
and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice
of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the
7 Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad
and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the
marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath
8 made herself ready. And to her was granted that
she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and
white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of
9 saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are*

Chap. 19 they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to 10
worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The returning Christ. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white 11
horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame 12
of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture 13
dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in 14
heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his 15
mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he 16
hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Destruction of the Beast. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and 17
he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the 18
flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both* free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the 19

kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the
20 horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.
21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Binding of Satan.

20 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great
2 chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and
3 Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little
4 season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and
5 reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.
6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no

First resurrection.

Chap. 20

power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Final conflict.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Final resurrection and judgement.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

The New Jerusalem.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed

2 away; and there was no more sea. And I John
saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down
from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride
3 adorned for her husband. And I heard a great
voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle
of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them,
and they shall be his people, and God himself
4 shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God
shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and
there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor
crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for
5 the former things are passed away. And he that
sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all
things new. And he said unto me, Write: for
6 these words are true and faithful. And he said
unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end. I will give unto him
that is athirst of the fountain of the water of
7 life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all
things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my
8 son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the
abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers,
and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall
have their part in the lake which burneth with fire
and brimstone: which is the second death.

Description of the City.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven
angels which had the seven vials full of the seven
last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come
hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's
10 wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to
a great and high mountain, and shewed me that
great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of
11 heaven from God, having the glory of God: and

Chap. 21 her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even
like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a 12
wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at
the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon,
which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the
children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the 13
north three gates; on the south three gates; and
on the west three gates. And the wall of the city 14
had twelve foundations, and in them the names of
the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that 15
talked with me had a golden reed to measure the
city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16
And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as
large as the breadth: and he measured the city
with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The
length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17
And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and*
forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of
a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of 18
the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure
gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations 19
of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all
manner of precious stones. The first foundation
was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a
chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, 20
sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte;
the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the
tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth;
the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates 21
were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one
pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold,
as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple 22
therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the

23 Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the
24 Lamb *is* the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and
25 honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night
26 there. And they shall bring the glory and honour
27 of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

River of water of life.

22 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of
2 God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of
3 the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his
4 servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.
5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Conclusion, warnings, and assurances.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things
7 which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of

Chap. 22

the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these 8
things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard
and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of
the angel which shewed me these things. Then 9
saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy
fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets,
and of them which keep the sayings of this book:
worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not 10
the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the
time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him 11
be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be
filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be
righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy
still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my re- 12
ward *is* with me, to give every man according as
his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the 13
beginning and the end, the first and the last.
Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that 14
they may have right to the tree of life, and may
enter in through the gates into the city. For 15
without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever
loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine 16
angel to testify unto you these things in the
churches. I am the root and the offspring of
David, *and* the bright and morning star. And the 17
Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him
that heareth say, Come. And let him that is
athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take
the water of life freely.

Epilogue and benediction.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the 18
words of the prophecy of this book, If any man
shall add unto these things, God shall add unto

him the plagues that are written in this book:
19 and if any man shall take away from the words of
the book of this prophecy, God shall take away
his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy
city, and *from* the things which are written in this
20 book. He which testifieth these things saith,
Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come,
21 Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all. Amen.

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THE DEAD SEA

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE REVELATION

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him 1

THE TITLE. 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine.' The shortest and probably the earliest form of the title of the book is 'Apocalypse of John,' or, using the Latin equivalent of the word 'Apocalypse,' 'Revelation of John.' On the meaning of the title see Introduction, p. 13, and on the authorship see Introduction, p. 34. The description of the author as 'the Divine,' which appears in our English version, is a title given to the Apostle not earlier than the fourth century. It refers not to his character, but to attainments, as when we speak of 'the great Divines of the English Church,' 'John the Theologian.'

i. 1–3. The superscription, indicating the source, the contents, and the importance of the book. The source of the revelation is God speaking through His Son, who exhibits to His servants the things that are to be, through the double agency of 'His angel' and 'His servant' John. The contents of the book are 'the word of God' and 'the testimony of Jesus Christ' (cf. i. 9), to which the writer bears witness. Its importance is indicated by the solemn blessing pronounced upon him who reads it in public, upon those who hear it read, and upon those who obey its monitions. Observe the division into three parts, each of which breaks up again into three ideas—a characteristic feature of the Johannine literature.

1. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ:** that is, the revelation which proceeds from him. For the thought, characteristic of John, that the Son receives of the Father in order to give unto men, cf. the Gospel of John iii. 32, v. 20, viii. 28, xii. 49 (commandment), xiv. 10; and especially vii. 16, 'My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.' See Bernard, *Progress of Doctrine*, p. 5f.

to shew unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his
2 angel unto his servant John; who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even*
3 of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

which must: according to the Divine ordering of events; cf. Luke **xxiv. 26.**

shortly come to pass. For the whole phrase cf. Dan. ii. 28 and 29. It is not merely the beginning of 'these things' that is anticipated 'shortly,' but their completion. The phrase rendered 'shortly' contains both ideas of 'soon' and 'swiftly'; cf. Deut. ix. 3; Acts xii. 7; Rom. xvi. 20, and especially Luke xviii. 8, where the same phrase is used. The expectation that the final end was close at hand, and that it would come, not through development, but through crises of judgement, was part of the common consciousness of the primitive church. That it has been disappointed is due to the double fact which was long overlooked—the slowness, as men count slowness, of His working, with whom 'a thousand years are as one day,' and the intervention of many anticipatory 'ends' or 'judgements' before the final one. Each of these anticipatory ends or crises prepares for, and confirms the certainty of, the final one.

his angel: probably the same who is again referred to in xxii. 16, but not to be identified with any other angel mentioned in the book. It has been suggested that this superscription was not written until the book was finished, in which case John would have in his mind the angel of the last chapter. In any case it is our Lord himself who opens the apocalyptic vision and calls his servant to behold it.

2. R.V. by substituting **even** for 'and' indicates that the 'word' and the 'witness' were the things which 'he saw'; cf. i. 9, xii. 17, xx. 4. The 'testimony of Jesus' is not the testimony concerning Jesus, but the truth to which Jesus testifies, which becomes in turn the burden of his servant's testimony; cf. vi. 9, xii. 17, xix. 10.

3. he that readeth. That is the Reader. It was already a common practice in the church to depute one of its members to read apostolic writings aloud in the hearing of the congregation. If this was not yet an office, it was on the way to become one.

The verse (cf. xxii. 7, 10) plainly shews that the writer claims for himself and his work the character and authority of prophecy

JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace 4
to you and peace, from him which is and which was and

(in distinction from the earlier apocalypses), and also the purpose of exhortation. What he wrote contained an oft-repeated summons to endurance, patience, and loyalty to Christ. The words translated 'keep,' 'testimony,' and 'bear witness' are characteristic of the Johannine diction.

i. 4–8. *The address or salutation.* This is introductory to the whole book. It is directed to the Seven Churches collectively; and they, here as elsewhere, are to be taken as representative of the whole church in its ideal unity which is unaffected by individual differences. The apostolic salutation invokes grace and peace from the Triune God, then proceeds to an exalted ascription of praise to the Redeemer, and concludes with a solemn reminder of the event upon which all Christian expectation was focussed, the return of Christ to judge the world; and this passes over into a proclamation in the name of God Himself of His own eternal power and glory.

4. John. This common letter addressed to the collective church opens with a salutation similar to that which is used in other apostolic Epistles (cf. 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1), but without the emphasis on the apostleship of the writer which is found in most of them (e.g. Rom. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1).

the seven churches: i.e. those about to be mentioned (verse 11), the same to which the Seven Letters are separately addressed. But there is a special significance in the choice of this exact number. Seven representing completeness, these churches are addressed both individually and as representative of the whole church.

Asia here, as elsewhere in the N.T., refers of course not to what we now know as Asia Minor, still less to the continent of Asia, but to the Roman 'Province' which bore the name. It included those portions of Asia Minor otherwise known as Mysia, Caria, Lydia, and (part of) Phrygia.

from him which is and which was and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. The 'grace and peace' which are invoked are traced to a threefold source in which it is hardly possible not to see an allusion to the three Persons of the Godhead, although they are arranged in an unwonted order, and the manner of describing the Holy Spirit is unusual. The Greek form of the first three clauses, which is here startling in its disregard of grammatical rules, shews probably that the writer was making use of a solemn and stereotyped phrase to describe the Creator; cf. i. 8, iv. 8. It is based doubtless on the great declaration of the name of

which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are
5 before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the
faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler

Jehovah in Exod. iii. 14, and moulded in part by the Septuagint translation of that passage, in part by the paraphrases and commentaries of the Rabbis. But the transforming influence of the revelation of Jesus Christ is seen in the striking substitution of 'which is to come' for the phrase 'which shall be,' with which the traditional description of Jehovah probably concluded. The Targums had paraphrased the words in Exodus: 'who was and who is and who shall be.' 'It is the Son, as the manifestation of the Godhead, who is mainly in the Apostle's mind' (Milligan), and his paraphrase is coloured by that aspect of the Godhead which is presented in the Incarnation; cf. Matt. xi. 3; Heb. x. 37.

the seven Spirits which are before his throne. If, as seems probable, this is to be understood as a reference to the Holy Spirit, the form must be regarded 'as expressing his plenitude and perfection' (Alford). 'The seven Spirits betoken the completeness and universality of the working of God's Holy Spirit.' The Spirit in the sevenfold completeness of his operation is similarly referred to in iv. 5 ('seven lamps of fire') and in v. 6 ('seven eyes' of the Lamb). The source of the conception has been commonly traced to the well-known passage in Isa. xi. 2. But the energies of the Spirit as there enumerated are strictly not seven, but six. The origin of this conception, which the writer evidently assumes as familiar to the minds of his readers, may be found rather in a combination of the idea in Ps. civ. 4 ('who maketh his angels spirits,' A. V.) with the later Jewish idea that the number of the chief angels was seven. Cf. Tobit xii. 15, 'I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels' (A. V.). This last idea is by Gunkel and others traced in its turn to the old Babylonian speculation according to which the sun, moon, and five planets were controlled by seven spirits. Evidence of the influence of such speculations is found in the later Jewish literature; e. g. in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xix. 1 ff.) 'And these classes of angels govern the movements of the stars and the changes of the moon and the movements of the sun. These are the archangels who are set over the angels' (Bousset).

5. and from Jesus Christ. The writer puts last that person of whose activity and grace he is about to speak.

the faithful witness: cf. iii. 14; John xviii. 37, 'to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.'

the firstborn of the dead (so Col. i. 18; cf. also 1 Cor. xv. 20), **and the ruler of the kings of the earth.** There is

of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and
loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us 6
to be a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father;

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a striking parallel to the double idea in Ps. lxxxix. 27, 'I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth' (A. V.). See also Isa. lv. 4, where the two ideas of the Messiah as witness and as ruler are combined.

Unto him that loveth us. Corrected by R. V. from 'loved.' Christ's love to his people is continuous, while his redeeming work is completed once for all. The contemplation of his glory as Messiah leads to this great doxology addressed to him as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people. Both the transition and the combination are remarkable. It is a transcription of the writer's experience as a Jew who had become a Christian. The first half of the verse represents the Jewish expectation of the Messiah at its highest. The second half shews this carried over into Christianity, but both fulfilled and transcended through the sacrifice of Christ. The true relation between Judaism and Christianity is here exhibited. And to seize the combination as it lay in the writer's mind is to have the key to much that is perplexing in his book. Intellectually to a large extent still a Jew, he is spiritually and ethically a true disciple of Christ, and possessed of his Spirit. He still clings to all that is valuable in the O. T., and to much besides that was commonly believed in his circle of Judaism; but that which is specifically Christian is at the same time held by him with a glow of conviction and a passionate gladness which make themselves felt in a passage such as this.

and loosed us from our sins by his blood. The insertion or the omission of a single letter makes the difference between the A. V. 'washed' and the R. V. 'loosed.' The manuscript evidence for each is very evenly balanced; the other evidence likewise. On the whole, the old reading, 'washed,' seems more in harmony with the thought of this book and with the Johannine diction in general. For the latter compare especially John xiii. 10; 1 John i. 7; also 1 Cor. vi. 11; Rev. vi. 14.

6. and he made us to be **a kingdom,** to be **priests unto his God and Father.** The thought has its rise in Exod. xix. 6, 'Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation,' and is found again in 1 Pet. ii. 9, where the LXX rendering of the verse in Exodus is followed. According to the form it takes here Christ's people not only have a kingdom, but are a kingdom, i. e. an organized society, realizing the will of a Divine King. As individuals they have a priestly privilege and duty, access even into the Holy of Holies 'by the blood of Jesus,' to offer

to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.
7 Amen. Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

'spiritual sacrifices' of prayer and praise and a surrendered life, and to make prevailing intercession for other men.

his God and Father. Cf. John xx. 17. 'In his perfect humanity Christ speaks of the Father as his God: Matt. xxvii. 46 Cf. Rev. iii. 2, 12' (Westcott).

Similar doxologies addressed to Christ are found in Rom. xvi. 27; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 11.

7. he cometh with the clouds. From Dan. vii. 13, as quoted in Mark xiv. 62. 'The motto of the book: He comes! With great impressiveness it is put into the mouth of God Himself' (Bousset). Cf. xiv. 14.

The rest of the verse is adapted from Zech. xii. 10, but the influence of the quotation of the same passage in Matt. xxiv. 30 is evident in the common divergence of both from the LXX in the word translated 'see,' and in the application as a warning of what in the original context is a gracious anticipation. 'They shall look on him whom they pierced' is quoted also in John xix. 37; and here also the Gospel and the Apocalypse shew a common divergence from the LXX translation. They both render correctly the word 'pierced,' the force of which is missed by the LXX. We have here, therefore, a point in favour of the common authorship.

mourn over him: *lit.* 'mourn *at* him,' i.e. 'their mourning shall be directed towards him as its object' (Alford). 'There will then be two kinds of mourning, the one due to the terror of an enemy, the other to the terror of the penitent' (Bengel).

8. I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God. The reading of R. V. makes plain what in A. V. might be doubtful, viz. that it is God the Lord who speaks. Cf. Isa. xliv. 6, 'Thus saith the Lord . . . the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last'; also xlviii. 12. The same description is applied to Him 'that sat upon the throne,' in Rev. xxi. 6; but to Christ in i. 17 and xxii. 13.

the Almighty. The word so translated is that which the LXX uses to render 'Lord of Hosts.' So in Amos iii. 13, iv. 13.

I John, your brother and partaker with you in the 9
tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus,
was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God

It is used nine times in this book, and always of God; and in one other passage in the N.T., 2 Cor. vi. 18.

i. 9–20. *The vision of the Son of Man.* The vision now to be described is intended specially as an introduction to the Seven Epistles. The description touches on the Seer and the circumstances in which the vision came to him (verses 9, 10[a]), the voice commanding to write (verses 10[b], 11), the appearance of the Son of Man (verses 12–16), and the command to write repeated with gracious encouragements (verses 17–20).

I John. The naming of himself by the writer (cf. xxii. 8) marks a sense of personal authority and also of personal relationship to the readers which is further expressed in the next clause.

your brother. This is variously taken as precluding the apostolic authorship or as confirming it, a continuation of the self-effacement characteristic of the author of the Fourth Gospel.

and partaker with you: *lit.* 'fellow-partaker'; as Paul was of God's grace (Phil. i. 7) or of the gospel (1 Cor. ix. 23), so John was of the mingled experience described as 'the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus.' Cf. 2 Thess. iii. 5. The threefold description presents the Christian life as the young church had found it to be, but also as the Master had predicted that it would be. It might have been built up out of his sayings: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation'; 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'; 'In your patience ye shall win your souls.' The fact that it has not been so built up, and yet so closely corresponds to his teaching, shews how really his disciples were enabled to read off their experience, how they were inspired by his Spirit to look at life from their Master's point of view. Patience is the ethical keynote of this book, the purpose of which is to harmonize the experience of tribulation with the conviction of God's kingdom proclaimed by Jesus and accepted by his disciples.

'Following the clue thus afforded me, I seek and hope to find patience in this book of awful import. Patience at the least: and along with that grace whatever treasures God may vouchsafe me. Now if any deign to seek patience in my company, I pray them to remember that One high above me in the Kingdom of Heaven heads our pilgrim caravan' (C. Rossetti).

was (more exactly, 'came to be') **in the isle that is called Patmos.** Patmos is a small rocky island, about ten miles long by six wide, lying off the SW. coast of Asia Minor, to the west of

10 and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a
11 trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and

Miletus, and about fifteen miles from Ephesus. According to an ancient tradition, offenders of rank were banished thither to work in the mines or marble quarries.

The form into which the sentence is cast suggests that the Seer was no longer in Patmos when he wrote down the record of his visions. That being so, it is at least improbable that the whole of what follows was heard and seen in the vision. Rather has he reproduced and developed what was given to him in germ through the vision on Patmos. 'And this by no means reduces the prophetic value of the Apocalypse, since the prophetic spirit, by which he was inspired, was by no means confined in its operation to the moments of the visions' (Weiss).

for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. This may be taken either as explaining the cause of John's being in Patmos, viz. that he had been banished thither because of his faithful witnessing to Christ, or as describing the purpose to which his sojourn there was subservient, viz. that he might receive the revelation of the word and testimony. The tone of the context supports the former; the meaning of the parallel phrase in verse 2 suggests the latter. But the meaning given to the same preposition in vi. 9 and xx. 4, together with the early tradition that the writer was sent as an exile to the island, makes the former the more probable.

10. I was (*lit.* 'came to be') **in the Spirit:** that is, in a prophetic ecstasy or trance. Cf. iv. 2, xxi. 10. The reverse process is described in Acts xii. 11, where the literal meaning is, 'when he came to be in himself.'

on the Lord's day. The observance of the first day of the week as a Christian festival is to be traced in Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The earliest use of the name, however, is in this passage. It occurs shortly afterwards in the *Didache*, and in the writings of Ignatius, who describes true Christians as those who no longer 'sabbatize,' but live 'according to the Lord's day.'

I heard behind me a great voice (*lit.* 'I heard behind me a voice great'), **as of a trumpet.** Cf. Ezek. iii. 12, 'Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing' (A. V.). The voice had trumpet-qualities of loudness and clearness. It is not indicated who was the speaker, but it seems most natural to suppose that the voice comes from the figure which John turns to see.

11. The clause omitted by R. V. has crept in here from the parallel passages in i. 8, 17.

send *it* to the seven churches; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.
And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. 12
And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks;
and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son 13
of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and
girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his 14
head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as

---

the seven churches. The names are given in the order in which the towns would be visited by a traveller who started from Ephesus (probably the writer's home) and went north as far as Pergamum, then turned inland to Thyatira, and thence south to Laodicea. Concerning the several churches see below, chapters ii and iii.

12. seven golden candlesticks: or lamp-stands. The imagery is doubtless connected with the seven-branched candlestick of the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 31) which had already figured in the vision of Zechariah (iv. 2). But the vision here is of seven separate stands each bearing a torch or lamp. Cf. the ten 'candlesticks' in Solomon's temple, 1 Kings vii. 49. Though thus disjoined from one another so that the figure of the Son of man is seen moving amongst them, the seven represent the church in its spiritual oneness, which remains even though one or others of its parts should require to be moved (ii. 5).

13. one like unto a son of man: this is the correct rendering, and shews that the phrase is connected in the first instance with Dan. vii. 13 rather than with the phraseology of the gospels. None the less, the figure which John saw was the figure of Christ. See xiv. 14, and note.

a garment down to the foot: this indicates an official vesture, a 'robe,' becoming a person of high dignity. The dignity suggested may be royal or priestly, or both. Cf. Exod. xxviii. 4, 31 (LXX, 27), where the same adjective is used of Aaron's 'robe' in the Greek.

a golden girdle: cf. Dan. x. 5. According to 1 Macc. x. 19 a golden girdle is part of the vesture of a king, but the position here assigned to it is characteristic of the girdle of the priest.

14. his head and his hair were white: this description is taken from the passage in Daniel where the prophet describes the vision of the Ancient of Days (vii. 9). The connexion of the two passages is very significant of the dignity assigned by the

15 snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters.
16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.
17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not;

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writer of the Apocalypse to Christ; here again he describes his appearance in terms which for the Jewish mind were associated by sacred tradition with the vision of the Almighty. Cf. i. 18, ii. 8, xxii. 12, 13 and notes.

15. burnished brass (cf. Ezek. i. 7; Dan. x. 6). The metal referred to probably corresponds to our 'bronze,' a mixture of copper and tin: the comparison is suggested by the brilliancy of the alloy when polished.

his voice as the voice of many waters: in Ezek. i. 24 the noise of wings 'like the noise of great waters' is also 'as the voice of the Almighty'; cf. also Ezek. xliii. 2, and Rev. xiv. 2.

16. seven stars: in the image before the eye of the Seer these probably appear as a chain of glittering jewels, hanging from the hand of Christ.

a . . . two-edged sword: cf. ii. 12, 16, xix. 15. A comparison with Heb. iv. 12, 'the word of God . . . sharper than any two-edged sword,' and 2 Thess. ii. 8, 'whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth,' suggests that the sword here referred to is the Word of the Spirit. The destroying power of the Word is also alluded to in the *Psalms of Solomon* xvii, where there is found a prayer that Messiah may 'destroy the heathen with the word of his mouth.'

as the sun shineth in his strength: i. e. when unclouded. So Judges v. 31, where the song of Deborah closes with the prayer that those that love Jehovah may be as the sun goeth forth in his might. Cf. also Matt. xvii. 2.

17. The whole impression is one of overwhelming glory and power; and like Daniel (viii. 17, x. 9) and Ezekiel (i. 28) the Seer prostrates himself before the vision, only to receive again like Daniel (viii. 18, x. 10, 16) a gracious and uplifting touch. The action is one characteristic of Jesus, as are the words that follow, **Fear not.** The action and the words are found combined in the account of the Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 6, 7) with which this whole passage has much in common.

I am the first and the last. It is very remarkable that the

I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I 18
was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I
have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore 19
the things which thou sawest, and the things which are,
and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the 20

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writer ascribes to Christ as a description of himself the very phrase which has previously (i. 8), and frequently in the O. T., been applied to the Almighty (cf. xxii. 13). It is a testimony all the more striking, because indirect, to the completeness of his acceptance of Christ as Divine.

and the Living one. The grouping of the words as well as the translation is slightly altered in the R. V. This further attribute is also an attribute of the Most High. It was as the 'living God' that Jehovah made Himself known to His people, as the 'living God' that the Psalmist longed after Him (Ps. xlii. 2), as 'the Son of the living God' that Peter hailed Jesus (Matt. xvi. 16).

These verses reflect the Johannine conception of Christ in the three stages of the 'glory' which he had with the Father before the world was, his humiliation culminating in his death, and the power and glory into which after death he passed.

18. the keys of death and of Hades. There is no distinction to be drawn between these two words; they both combine in one idea the underworld of the dead. Death is spoken of as a locality with 'gates' in Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 14; Hades also in Isa. xxxviii. 10; Matt. xvi. 16. It was part of the teaching of the Rabbinic schools that the key of death was one of four (the keys of life, the grave, food, and rain) which were in the hand of God alone.

19. therefore. The fact of Christ's authority re-asserted after his incarnation and death is the ground of the commission now given to his servant to proclaim the contents of his vision. The connexion of ideas is the same as in Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

which thou sawest: the vision. **which are:** the situation of the church to be described in the Seven Letters. **which shall come to pass:** the crises of judgement which the writer is to proclaim.

20. the mystery: understand 'as touching the mystery.' Both the language and the didactic method recall our Lord's way of instructing his disciples; cf. Matt. xiii. 11, 18.

The sense of the word 'mystery' needs to be carefully observed. It is not used in the Bible in the modern sense of 'something that cannot be fathomed or understood,' but on the contrary it indicates, either something which is waiting to be revealed, or that which mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven

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when explained conveys understanding. In the latter sense it comes near to our word 'symbol.' And this is the sense in which it is to be taken here and in xvii. 7. The fact that here and elsewhere the word was rendered by *sacramentum* in the Latin Vulgate has had strange and unintended results in Latin theology.

angels of the seven churches. To the question, What or who is represented by these 'angels'? many answers have been given; of these only two are important. On the one hand, it has been thought that the 'angel' of a church stands for that church's human representatives, its rulers, teachers or presbyters; and as only one is specified, the 'angel' is supposed to refer specifically to the bishop of the church. Against this have to be set the facts that (1) the word 'angel' is never used in the N. T. of a human being, except in two passages where it stands simply for 'messenger'; (2) it is very unlikely that, at the date when the Apocalypse was written, the development from a plurality of presbyter-bishops in each congregation to a single monarchical bishop had taken place in Asia Minor. There was probably, therefore, up to this time no single individual who could properly be addressed as representing the local church, and (3) in the Letters themselves the 'angel' is identified with his church as partaker of its character and its destiny to a degree beyond what could be ascribed to any human ruler. The other interpretation is therefore to be preferred, that, namely, which sees in the angel of each church a personification of its spirit or an ideal representative of its personality. Confirmation of this view is found in the Jewish doctrine of 'guardian angels,' which have influence over and responsibility for nations, communities, or individuals. This idea appears clearly for the first time in Dan. x. 13, 20, though it possibly underlies also such a passage as Isa. xxiv. 21, 22, where 'the universal wickedness of the world appears laid at the door of its rulers, whether angelic or human, and the judgement of God falls on "the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of earth upon the earth"' (Davidson). The idea was further developed in the Apocrypha, and is referred to in the N. T. (Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15).

The true idea seems to be that the 'angels' of the churches are a symbolical representation in which the active, as distinguished from the passive, life of the church finds expression. To John every person, every thing, has its angel; God proclaims and executes His will by angels (Rev. vii. 2, xiv. 6, 8, 9). 'The waters have an angel' (xvi. 5). 'Fire has an angel' (xiv. 18). 'The winds have an angel' (vii. 1). 'The abyss has an angel' (ix. 11). In like stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

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manner the 'angels of the churches' are the churches themselves, with this mark of distinction only, that, when they are thus spoken of, they are viewed not merely as in possession of inward vigour, but as exercising it towards things without. (Milligan, in *Expositor's Bible*; see also Lightfoot on *Philippians*, p. 199 f.)

ii. 1—iii. 22. THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

In order to secure a full understanding of these Letters, it is necessary to look at each of them in a double aspect, first, as addressed to an individual, historical church, and reflecting the character and situation of the church to which it is addressed, and secondly, as directed to these churches in a representative capacity, and together standing for the whole church, and reflecting the strength and weakness, the victories and shortcomings, which characterize the church of Christ wherever it may be found. The former aspect is evident in the graphic delineation and differentiation of each particular church, and in the close correspondence of its features to what is otherwise known to have been its character. The latter is to be inferred from the following considerations: (1) It would be inconsistent with the method of the book as a whole, were the number seven not typical of a larger whole, as well as descriptive of seven individuals. (2) Each Letter opens with a phrase descriptive of Christ the Speaker, which is based on one or other of the features in the description of the Son of man as seen in the vision of i. 13–18. As that whole is thus broken up into parts, so all these parts again combine to form one whole. (3) Each Letter contains an application of its contents not alone to the church which is specifically addressed, but to 'the churches.' We are to find, therefore, at once seven Epistles addressed to seven churches, and one Epistle addressed to the church; individual portraits of seven Christian communities, and one composite portrait of the whole; anticipations of the future of each, but also principles which must govern the fate of all.

The construction of the Epistles deserves attention. They have much in common, and some points of difference. Each Epistle begins with the same command to write to the angel of the church, and with the same phrase, 'These things saith.' Each Epistle proceeds to describe the Speaker under one aspect of his power, then to characterize the church addressed in a clause beginning, 'I know,' then develops that description into an exhortation either to repentance or to steadfastness, and culminates in a promise 'to him that overcometh.' Each Epistle also contains towards the close the solemn warning, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.'

2 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write;

The only difference in construction is seen in the position given to this warning, which in three cases precedes, but in four follows, the promise. It is possible that this distinction is connected in the mind of the writer with a distinction between two groups of churches, the first three and the last four. There is a difference of tone between these two groups which it is easier to feel than to describe. 'In none of the three (first) cases is the church perfect, but in none is she really faithless to her trust. She is in danger; she needs to be perfected by suffering; by suffering she is perfected: but she knows that he who will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God, and the enemies of God are her enemies' (Milligan). In the second group the churches as a whole seem to have been faithless; it is only a 'remnant' which is acknowledged as faithful. In them the struggle is fiercer, the issue more in doubt, and the promises are fuller and more eloquent of victory for those who endure to the end.

ii. 1–7. *Letter to the church at Ephesus.*

1. To the angel. See above on i. 20.

Ephesus. The capital of the Roman proconsular province of Asia. It was situated at the sea-end of the principal trade-route through Asia Minor between east and west, and was for a long period the greatest commercial centre of the country. Its importance was further enhanced by its possessing the most famous and popular temple of Artemis (see Acts xix. 23 ff.). The word descriptive of the city in Acts xix. 35, which in the A. V. is translated 'worshipper,' in the R. V. 'temple-keeper,' is a technical term, and indeed a title of honour which the town inscribed upon its coins (see Ramsay's art. 'Ephesus' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*). It has also been inferred from the coinage of Ephesus that it possessed besides a temple of the Emperor, if not two. This great centre both of commercial and religious life was recognized by Paul as a strategic point of the highest importance for his work. Accordingly, he took up his residence there for a longer period than in any other place, preaching for three months in the synagogue, and then for two years using the lecture-room of Tyrannus. To Ephesus also he sent Timothy to carry on the work of evangelization. There too John, the writer of the Apocalypse, had his home for many years, and there he is said to have died. Both Jewish and Gentile elements were strongly represented in the church at Ephesus, and Paul's Epistle to Timothy, as well as the letter of Ignatius, testifies to the danger of schism. The geographical position of the city gave it a peculiar and sad significance in the martyr-experiences of Asian Christians. Many

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: **I** know thy works, and thy toil 2
and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; and thou hast 3
patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not

of the sufferers by persecution were deported to Rome there to suffer in the Colosseum. Ephesus is the 'sea-end of the road along which most of the criminals sent to Rome from the province of Asia would be led, and at Ephesus they would find ships to take them to Ostia.' To this there is a touching reference in the Letter of Ignatius to the church at Ephesus: 'Ye are a high-road of them that are on their way to die unto God[1].'

the seven stars. See above i. 16. 'This contrast between the heavenly and the earthly fires—the star shining by its own inherent light and the lamp flickering and uncertain, requiring to be fed with fuel and tended with care—cannot be devoid of meaning. The star is the suprasensual counterpart, the heavenly representative; the lamp, the earthly realization, the outward embodiment' (Lightfoot).

2. thy works (so in all seven Epistles except those to Smyrna and Pergamum), **and thy toil and patience.** The 'toil and patience' are the works of the church at Ephesus: laborious effort to resist and overcome error, and steadfast endurance in bearing witness for Christ. The same three words are used to describe the character of the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. i. 3).

The occasion of the toil and the patience which they have been called upon to shew is further explained in the following clauses.

them which call themselves apostles. Those who bore, or at least claimed, the name of 'apostles' must have been a considerable number towards the end of the first century, and the scattered Christian communities had to be on their guard against pretenders to the name. In the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (chap. xi) careful directions are given by which such false prophets might be recognized. The determination of this church at Ephesus to detect and avoid these false teachers finds an interesting illustration in the Letter of Ignatius to the same church (chap. ix): 'I have learned that certain persons passed through you from yonder, bringing evil doctrine; whom ye suffered not to sow seed in you, for ye stopped your ears, so that ye might not receive the seed sown by them.'

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[1] Cf. Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 318.

4 grown weary. But I have *this* against thee, that thou
5 didst leave thy first love. Remember therefore from
whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first
works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy
6 candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. But
this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the

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3. **grown weary.** The same word is used of Jesus beside Jacob's Well.

4. **thy first love:** i. e. the love thou hadst at the beginning. Some have thought that the reference is to 'brotherly love' (1 John iv. 14); but in view of the imagery so frequently adopted in the O.T. (Jer. ii. 2, 'the love of thine espousals'; Hos. ii. 14–19; cf. Matt. xxiv. 25), it is more probably to be understood of the love of the people to God, the warm enthusiasm of the church towards Christ (John xxi. 15).

5. **the first works** are those which characterized the first love: their resumption will be the outward and visible sign of the renewal of the old affection. Here, as in the gospels, Christ demands conduct as the fruit and guarantee of love and faith. The verse is full of echoes of the Synoptists; cf. Matt. v. 14–16; Mark iv. 25; also John xiv. 15.

6. **But this thou hast.** 'We may notice the tender compassion of our blessed Lord, who, in his blame of a falling church, yet selects for praise one particular in which his mind is yet retained' (Alford).

thou hatest. Cf. Browning's description of *Dante*—

> 'who loved well because he hated,
> Hated wickedness that hinders loving.'

the works of the Nicolaitans. The false apostles who have been mentioned in verse 2 are now named, as they are named again and more fully described in the Letter to the church at Pergamum. Of the history and tenets of this sect nothing certain is known. There is an early conjecture which assigns its origin to Nicolas the Deacon (Acts vi. 5). It is probable, from the comparison between them and Balaam in verses 14, 15, that they were an Antinomian sect who carried to licentious extremes the liberty from the Mosaic Law wherewith Christ had made men free. They 'represent a more advanced and aggressive stage of Antinomianism than that which was found in the Corinthian church. They are organized into a sect, with a "doctrine," and stand in a nearer relationship to the "false teachers" referred to in Jude 4, 11, 12 and 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 14, 15, who "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness," "denied even the Master" (probably through countenancing idolatry), and "followed the way of Balaam," "running riotously into error."' (Cowan in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*)

Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, 7
let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To
him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the
tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

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7. He that hath an ear. This formula, which recurs in all the seven Letters, refers to the whole contents of the Letter, not merely to the promise, as the punctuation of the A. V. might suggest. It involves John's claim to speak as a prophet (cf. i. 3), commissioned by the Spirit, and also the expansion of the scope of the message to each church, first to all the seven, and then to the church at large. For the phrase cf. Matt. xi. 15, xiii. 9, &c., also Ezek. iii. 27.

To him that overcometh. A like promise is contained in each of the seven Letters. The verb is used absolutely, without any indication of the foe to be overcome. So in John xvi. 33, 1 John ii. 13, and of Christ himself, Rev. iii. 21. But in the last passage the emphasis is on the victory as completed; in the promises (cf. also xxi. 7), it is on the continuous overcoming, the life of victory. The final victory and its reward are the fruits of innumerable antecedent victories, each of which also receives its reward of the like character with the crowning one.

will I give to eat: i. e. give power or opportunity to eat.

the tree of life, which once stood in the midst of the Garden of Eden (Gen. ii. 9), is here pictured as standing in the heavenly garden of God. So Enoch in his vision-visit to Paradise finds there the tree of life, and is told: 'No mortal is permitted to touch this tree of delicious fragrance till the great day of judgement; . . . this tree will then be given to the righteous and the humble' (*Enoch* xxiv, xxv); cf. 4 Esra viii. 52, 'For you is Paradise opened, and the tree of life planted.' See also Rev. xx. 2, and note. 'The promise and its expression are in the closest connexion with our Lord's discourse in John vi' (Alford).

Paradise. The word, which occurs only three times in the N. T. (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4, and here), is originally a Median or Persian word for 'park' or 'garden.' It is found in this sense in Cant. iv. 13 (R. V. 'orchard'); Eccles. ii. 5 (R. V. 'parks'); Neh. ii. 8 (A. V. 'forest'). But from its being used by the LXX to translate the name of the 'garden' of Eden, it acquired a special application to the 'garden of God' (Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9). 'In the New Testament it is raised to still higher uses. The primaeval Eden gives place to a "garden of God," that is, not of earth; the thought of a Paradise of the past is lost in the hope of a Paradise of the future, and the word becomes a name for the scene of rest and recompense for the righteous after death' (S. D. F. Salmond

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write;
These things saith the first and the last, which was
9 dead, and lived *again*: I know thy tribulation, and thy
poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them
which say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a
10 synagogue of Satan. Fear not the things which thou art
about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some

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in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, where much further information of interest will be found).

ii. 8–11. *Letter to the church at Smyrna.*

8. to the angel. The suggestion of ancient commentators that this Letter was addressed to Polycarp, as the bishop of Smyrna, falls to the ground with the theory that the 'angel' stands for a human individual.

Smyrna—which alone of the seven cities flourishes to-day—is situated about fifty miles north of Ephesus, at the sea-end of another great trade-route. It disputed with Ephesus the commercial supremacy of Asia, had a large Jewish settlement, and was early the home of a Christian community, of which Polycarp was bishop until his martyrdom in A. D 155.

the first and the last: see on i. 18; also i. 8, where the same attribute is applied to God.

lived again. The thought is slightly different from that in i. 17, 'the Living one'; here it is the moment of the resurrection that is emphasized rather than the continuous life; cf. Rom. xiv. 9, R. V. The description of Christ here selected is calculated to encourage the struggling church at Smyrna by presenting to its view the Lord in all the power of his endless life.

9. (but thou art rich). Cf. Jas. ii. 5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom . . . ?' (A.V.). Also Ps. xxxv. 10.

and the blasphemy (R.V. marg. 'reviling'): i.e. the calumny thou sufferest, proceeding from those, &c.

Jews: cf. iii. 9. These are probably Jews by birth who are represented as unworthy of their name. The narrative of the martyrdom of Polycarp shews with what fierce gladness the Jews in Smyrna assisted in the persecution of the Christians.

a synagogue of Satan. See below iii. 9, and note.

10. the devil is about to cast. The action of the persecutors is ascribed to the evil spirit which prompts them. The predicted sufferings correspond with those more than once foretold by Jesus; cf. Matt. x. 17–19, xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 12–17; and also to those already experienced by the church (Acts viii. 3).

of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. He that hath an 11
ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write; 12

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that ye may be tried: or 'tempted.' The purpose in the mind of the persecutors is that they, the followers of Christ, may be coerced into denying their faith (Heb. xi. 36, 37); in the mind of God, however, who permitted the trial, it was that their faith might be established (cf. 1 Pet. i. 7; Jas. i. 3, 12).

ye shall have tribulation. An application to a specific occasion of the general announcement made by Jesus (John xvi. 33).

ten days. Not to be understood literally, neither in any symbolical sense, but simply as indicating a brief and definite period.

faithful unto death: i. e. up to the point of enduring death for the Name of Christ, in like manner as Christ himself had been 'obedient' up to the point of death (Phil. ii. 8). So xii. 11.

the crown of life. So Jas. i. 12; cf. 'crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. iv. 8); 'of glory' (1 Pet. v. 4). The word indicates not a royal diadem, but a victor's wreath (see Trench, *Synonyms*, xxiii; Lightfoot on *Philippians* iv. 1). What is promised is eternal life as a crown of victory.

11. the second death: cf. xx. 6. The phrase seems to have its origin in Rabbinic literature. One Targum speaks of 'the wicked who die the second death, and are assigned to Gehenna'; another Targum paraphrases Deut. xxxiii. 6 thus, 'Let Reuben live in this world, and not die the second death.' 'The second death is the final condemnation which sinners undergo at the Judgement of God. The first death is, on the other hand, the natural one' (Bousset).

ii. 12–17. *Letter to the church at Pergamum.*

12. Pergamum: an ancient city situated about as far north of Smyrna as Smyrna was north of Ephesus, but some fifteen miles from the coast. Historically and politically it was a place of even greater importance than either of these, as the former capital of a native state; but it was slowly giving way to them in consequence of their better commercial position. It continued, however, to be a very important centre of the religious life of Asia, as the chief seat of the worship of Æsculapius, and still more as

These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged
13 sword: I know where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's
throne is: and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not
deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness,

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the earliest seat in that province of the worship of the Roman emperor. Since B. C. 29 there had been a temple here dedicated to Augustus and Rome, with a guild of priests established in its service.

he that hath the sharp two-edged sword. This phrase is chosen from the description in i. 16, probably to suggest the presence of power to expose and condemn the followers of the new Balaam.

13. where thou dwellest. 'Thy works' is omitted in this case, not that there were none to praise, but because the most striking thing about this church was its situation of peculiar difficulty and danger. The recognition of this by the Lord is calculated to convey encouragement and hope. Ps. cxxxix. 2; John i. 48; 2 Kings xix. 27.

The character of the situation in Pergamum is then exposed in the words **where Satan's throne is.** All other explanations of this phrase (Pergamum, the seat of special idolatry—of the worship of Æsculapius with its serpent-symbol—the scene of special persecution) are only partial and incomplete in comparison with that which recognizes in the throne of Satan set up at Pergamum the dominant worship of the Roman emperor—the diabolical identification of the false worship of a man with political duty and patriotism. 'The city was still officially the capital of the province, and especially it was recognized as the chief centre of the imperial worship, in which the unity and loyalty of the province was expressed. In this latter point lay the peculiar aggravation and abomination. It was the worship of the emperor that was recognized, when the Apocalypse was written, as the special foe of Christianity, as Antichrist, as Satan. It was the refusal of the Christians to pay the proper respect to the emperors, by performing the prescribed acts of ritual and worship in the imperial religion, that formed the test by which they could be detected, and the reason why they were outlawed; their refusal was interpreted as a proof of disloyalty and treason, for it was a refusal to acquiesce in, and to be members of, the imperial unity. Pergamum, as the chief centre of that imperial worship for the province, was the seat and "the throne of Satan"' (Ramsay in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*).

in the days of Antipas. Nothing is known concerning this man, or the events with which his name was connected, beyond what may be inferred from this verse, viz. that in some persecumy faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because 14 thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also some that hold 15 the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. Repent 16 therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith 17 to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I

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tion which had befallen the Christians at Pergamum, one at least of their number, Antipas, had been 'tortured, not accepting deliverance,' but 'faithful unto death.' It is interesting to observe the word 'witness' in this passage in transition from its general meaning to that special significance of 'martyr,' which it has in the history of the church.

14. Even this church, whose difficulties and faithfulness called out such tender consideration, had within its border an element of dangerous heresy in certain teachers of false doctrine, who seem to have been at least tolerated up to this point. They are described first, symbolically, as those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, and then directly as Nicolaitans, the same sect that troubled Ephesus at the same time. See ii. 6, note.

Balaam. See Num. xxxi. 16, xxv. 1, 2; Jude 11. The point of comparison lies in the method recommended by Balaam to Balak in order to seduce the Israelites from their allegiance to Jehovah, namely, by tempting them to licentiousness. The false teachers of Antinomianism in the Christian church who asserted that, because they were not under the law, but under grace (Rom. vi. 15), therefore what was sin for other men was not sin in them, were practically inculcating the same precepts ('doctrine'), and preparing the same results.

eat things sacrificed to idols. See Acts xv. 29; 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10; in the latter passage Paul recognizes the possibility that the liberty he claims might become a stumbling-block to those who were weak.

16. The exhortation to repentance addressed to the church infers an invitation to deal with these false teachers as the church at Ephesus had done, by which they had not been 'borne' but probably cast out.

give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

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17. the hidden manna. The meaning of this allusion can only be understood in the light of later Jewish tradition and speculation. Aaron had been commanded to 'lay up' a pot or basket of the manna 'before the Testimony' (Exod. xvi. 33). This was taken subsequently to mean 'within the Ark' (so Heb. ix. 4). In later times it became a tradition among the Jews that, before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Ark with all its contents was removed by Jeremiah, in accordance with Divine command, and hidden in a cave of Sinai (see 2 Macc. ii. 1); further, that when the expected advent of the Messiah took place, then these hidden things would be revealed and restored to their ancient place. Among the hidden things then to be revealed they counted the 'manna.' Thus in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (xxix. 8) we read: 'And at that time the stores of manna shall descend again from above; and they shall eat of it in those years.' It is, therefore, in terms of this Jewish expectation that the promise is here expressed (cf. John vi. 31–33). Those who overcome the temptation to indulge in forbidden meats will receive the heavenly manna as their reward, not merely the restoration of the old privilege, but the partaking of that 'true bread from heaven,' of which even the manna was but a symbol.

a white stone. The word suggests not a common stone, but a pebble such as was used for counting or for voting by ballot. Here it must be understood to have a surface large and flat enough to receive an inscription. The difficulty of explaining this figure arises from uncertainty as to which of many uses of such a stone is the basis of the symbolism. Was it connected with (1) the white stone or pebble used by jurors to signify acquittal; (2) a stone tablet which served as a pass to secure entrance into an assembly or a banquet; (3) precious stones which were said by tradition to have been gathered by the Israelites along with the manna; or (4) the Urim and Thummim, the stones of which were also inscribed with names? Each of these theories has its supporters of note, but none of them provides a convincing explanation of the new name upon the stone known only to the receiver. That explanation seems the best which finds the origin of the symbol in the sphere of popular superstition. Among the later Jews, especially, great and mysterious power had for long been ascribed to secret names, the knowledge or pronouncement of which secured the opening of closed portals, the discovery of hid treasure, or the co-operation of supernatural powers. One special application of such names of power was to obtain entrance

And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write; 18
These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes

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for the ascending soul through the successive gates which were supposed to bar its way to the highest heaven. Such ideas found special currency and continual development in those quarters where Jewish and Hellenic thought were mingling, from which issued early in the second century the speculative systems of Gnosticism. To one holding such ideas, a white stone with a secret name upon it would signify an amulet inscribed with a formula or name of power by which he could secure salvation or entrance into heaven. To this, as to the 'hidden manna,' the Apocalypse gives a Christian interpretation. The white stone is just the pebble or tile or plaque on which a name could conveniently be inscribed. The promised gift of Christ is the new name, which here, as elsewhere in the Bible, stands for a new character (Gen. xxxii. 28; Matt. xvi. 17, 18). Our Lord once more clothes his own great gift in the forms 'understanded of the people,' thereby contrasting the false with the true. Did others speak of symbols giving them a right to enter heaven? He would give to him that overcometh a surer symbol for a truer heaven. Did others offer to teach the mighty names before which closed portals would fly back? He would put in his faithful servants' hearts the 'name which is above every name, the name before which every knee must bow, of things on earth and things in heaven and things under the earth'; and with that he would give him the new nature, the character conformed to the image of Christ, which is the real key to the true heaven.

ii. 18–29. *Letter to the church at Thyatira.*

18. Thyatira. Unlike the cities to which the previous Letters have been addressed, Thyatira was a place of no great importance; it lay about a day's journey SSE. from Pergamum, on the great high road from that city to Sardis. It was famous chiefly for the flourishing industry of dyeing which was carried on there, a representative of which is found in Lydia, Paul's convert at Philippi (Acts xvi. 14, 15).

the Son of God. A title which had not been given to Christ in the description of i. 13 ff. Seeing that the second Psalm is evidently the source of much of the phrasing of this Epistle, it is natural to trace this clause, in the first instance, to Ps. ii. 17; the attributes of the Messiah are transferred spontaneously and without modification to the risen Jesus. The title had been claimed, indirectly, by Jesus (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22); assigned to him by Peter (Matt. xvi. 16); and formed the basis of the charge against him before the Sanhedrin (Matt. xxvi. 68; John

like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished
19 brass: I know thy works, and thy love and faith and
ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more
20 than the first. But I have *this* against thee, that thou
sufferest the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a

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xix. 7; cf. Rom. i. 3, 4, viii. 3, 32). 'We must recognize without hesitation that Christ in the Apocalypse is elevated to the plane of God' (Reuss).

who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass. See i. 14, 15. These distinctive features are emphasized here, because it is searching and crushing power that is to be manifested in the threatened judgement upon Thyatira.

19. thy works. See on ii. 2. The word 'and' is explanatory; the works of this church are love and faith, and ministry and patience. The love and faith may be towards God, in which case they form a pair of characteristics contrasting with service and patience, which find expression in relations with men; or the first two also may have only a human reference, signifying 'brotherly love' (cf. note on ii. 2), and 'good faith' or 'honour,' as in Gal. v. 22, R.V.

and that thy last works are more than the first: differing herein from those of Ephesus; cf. ii. 4, 5; 2 Pet. ii. 20.

20. The fault here, as at Pergamum, is the toleration of the false teaching.

the woman Jezebel. The rejected reading 'thy wife' has arisen from the idea in the mind of some copyist that the 'angel' of the church was its bishop. Touching the significance of this name, there are two points to be ascertained regarding it. (1) Does it (*a*) stand for an actual individual, or (*b*) symbolize a party, heresy, or tendency towards false teaching? And (2) does the person or party it refers to exist (*a*) within the church, or (*b*) outside it? The only light on these questions comes from the context, and from comparison with the parallel remonstrances addressed to the churches at Ephesus and Pergamum. The emphatic description, 'the woman,' and the characterization of her claim to be a prophetess (cf. the claim of the false teachers at Ephesus to be apostles), and of her activity in leading the people astray (cf. the activity of the Nicolaitans, ii. 14), confirm the impression that the writer has a real woman before his eyes; while the character of the false teaching, encouragement of licentiousness, and latitudinarianism in regard to things offered to idols, point to an influence operating within the church to lead its members from the right way. This last consideration tells heavily against the suggestion, otherwise attractive, which has

prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants
to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to
idols. And I gave her time that she should repent; and 21
she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold, I 22
do cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery

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been put forward by Schürer, who makes it at least probable that Thyatira was a seat of the Chaldæan Sibyl, and raises the question whether, under the figure of 'Jezebel,' we ought not to recognize the priestess of that heathen shrine. It remains most probable that the reference is to some well-known and influential woman within the church at Thyatira, whose influence on the Christian community was parallel to that of Jezebel upon Ahab—a self-styled 'prophetess,' whose teaching and example were alike destructive of Christian morality. 'The prophets and prophetesses were, at the time when the Letters before us were written, still, in part at least, the foremost authorities in the congregations. There is therefore nothing startling in finding here also a prophetess playing a part in a sect of false teachers. It is, however, worthy of note that just here in Thyatira—which later on became probably one of the chief centres of Montanism—false prophetism had to be attacked' (Bousset).

21. I gave her time. This false teaching was therefore no new thing at Thyatira, but warning had already been given and opportunity to repent, possibly by the Apostle John himself.

she willeth not. So R. V., marking this true meaning of the Greek. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 37, 'and ye would not'; John v. 40, vii. 17, 'if any man willeth.'

22. I do cast. The present tense signifies that the judgement is just about to begin or has already begun.

into a bed. There is an ironical correspondence between the judgement and the sin. The parallelism with 'great tribulation' suggests that it is a bed of sickness or of pain which is to take the place of the bed of lust. A striking parallel to the whole will be found in Heine's description of his 'mattress-grave,' and of God as 'the great Master of irony.'

commit adultery. If we understand Jezebel to represent an actual personality, then this phrase, and the reference to 'her children,' will also describe actual persons, 'her proper adherents, not those who suffer her, but those who are begotten of her, and go to constitute her.' The change in the word used to describe her shame—from 'fornication' to 'adultery'—recalls the well-known symbolism of the O. T. for rebellious and idolatrous Israel, and suggests at least the thought that the libertinism, which was taught and practised at Thyatira, flourished

with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her
23 works. And I will kill her children with death; and all
the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth
the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of
24 you according to your works. But to you I say, to the
rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this
teaching, which know not the deep things of Satan, as
25 they say; I cast upon you none other burden. Howbeit

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under the name of religion, and involved infidelity towards God, as well as surrender to the lusts of the flesh.

23. with death: marg. 'pestilence,' as the Plague has often gone by the simple name of 'the Death.'

all the churches. The recognition of God's judgement upon the adherents of Jezebel was to be as widespread as the scandal of their proceedings had been. Their punishment would be such as to vindicate the authority of Christ in all the churches round about.

he which searcheth the reins and hearts: i.e. the inmost thoughts and desires of a man. Once more, an attribute of God; cf. Pss. vii. 9, xxvi. 2; Jer. xvii. 10.

24. as many as have not this teaching. Those who did, and those who did not, hold this teaching, are plainly contemplated as belonging to the same circle, i. e. both within the pale of the Christian church.

as they say: i.e. the party of the libertines. What did they say? Either they actually offered to their adherents a knowledge of 'the deep things of Satan,' as within their reach as Christ's disciples, pressing liberty into the service of reckless self-indulgence, and wickedly misapplying such texts as, 'All things are yours.' Or, what they offered to the seeker consisted of the same unclean speculations and immoral practices, but under the specious name of the 'deep things of God' (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 10), a phrase which, in that case, must be understood to be interpreted, with sarcastic accuracy, by the speaker into 'deep things of Satan.' (For similar inversions of language compare the O. T., and especially 'Bosheth' for 'Baal.') The diction of this clause, 'who *know* not the *deep things*,' is probably both emphatic and suggestive. It certainly seems to echo the technical language of the Gnostic schools, which were already beginning to disturb the simple faith in Christ of many in the churches of Asia. It was quite in their manner to insist on knowledge of mysteries (*gnōsis*) as an indispensable addition to, or even substitute for,

that which ye have, hold fast till I come. And he that 26
overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end,
to him will I give authority over the nations: and he 27
shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the
potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of
my Father: and I will give him the morning star. He 28, 29
that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the
churches.

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write; 3

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faith, and also to boast of their power to penetrate into the deep and hidden things of Nature and of God.

I cast upon you none other burden. The close similarity of the language to that employed in the decree of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 28) is to be observed, and makes it probable that by 'burden' we are to understand 'obligation,' and, by 'other,' 'in addition to those imposed by the authority of the Spirit at that time.' The early prohibitions against fornication, and using meat that had been offered to idols, are re-enacted. These are the things which they are to 'hold fast.'

26. The **works** which the Lord requires of his people are his own works, reproduced in and by them; their victory consists in observing or maintaining them 'to the end' (cf. Mark xiii. 13).

to him will I give authority. The imagery of this promise is derived from the familiar description of the rule of Messiah in Psalm ii; see especially verses 8, 9. The enduring disciples of Christ are to be partakers in his Messianic rule.

27. as I also have received of my Father. The thought and diction are alike Johannine; cf. John x. 18.

28. the morning star. The same image is used in xxii. 16, but there it is a description of Christ himself. Here it is intended, probably, to indicate the freshness and the beauty of the glory with which the redeemed are to be clothed. The glory of the Lord is to be the glory also of his saints (cf. 2 Cor. iii. 18).

29. He that hath an ear. This exhortation stands here for the first time *after* the promise, marking a distinction between the first three Letters and those that follow. See above on opening of this chapter.

iii. 1–6. *Letter to the church at Sardis.*

1. Sardis, about thirty-five miles south of Thyatira, formerly the prosperous capital of the kingdom of Lydia, and the residence of Crœsus, had sunk rapidly during the Roman domination to

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of
God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou
2 hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. Be
thou watchful, and stablish the things that remain, which
were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine
3 fulfilled before my God. Remember therefore how thou
hast received and didst hear; and keep *it,* and repent.
If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief,
and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon
4 thee. But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did

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a town of the third rank. Its population had long been notorious for luxury and licentiousness, and it is evident that the Christian community there had a hard struggle to resist the insidious atmosphere by which it was surrounded. All trace of both city and church was obliterated by the Tartar invasion, and only a few ruins and a wretched village now mark its site.

the seven Spirits of God: see i. 4. The phrase signifies 'the plenitude of the Godhead in all its attributes and energies.'

seven stars: see i. 16, 20.

The condemnation of the church at Sardis is more severe than that of any other church. No good works are ascribed to it. Its apparent 'life' is only an appearance, and in reality it is 'dead in trespasses and sins.' Nevertheless, this death is not absolute or final. There were still some things that remained, still some names that had not defiled their garments: and to them an appeal could still be made, an appeal to awake, to rise from the dead, and to strengthen the graces that survived (cf. Eph. v. 14).

hast a name: this closely corresponds with our modern phrase, 'nominally Christian.'

3. Remember (cf. the advice to Ephesus, ii. 5) . . . **how thou hast received** (and still hast—the gift of God) **and didst hear** (—the gospel): cf. 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, ii. 13. The exhortation is to remember the past, to keep fast hold of what still remains, and to repent or return to the early disposition which marked the first acceptance of the truth.

I will come as a thief: cf. xvi. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Matt. xxiv. 43 ff.

4. The situation is critical, but not hopeless. There are even in Sardis a few persons ('names,' cf. Acts i. 15; Rev. xi. 13) who escape the general condemnation, as they have avoided the general corruption. They 'have not sullied the purity of their

not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh 5
shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to 6
the churches.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; 7
These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he

Christian life by falling into sin' (Alford), and their reward is the confirming of their purity.

they shall walk with me: i. e. they shall enjoy and be seen in my company; cf. John vi. 66; Mic. vi. 8.

5. in white garments: the colour of victory and triumph.

the book of life. The root of this idea is found in the roll or register of citizens of Jerusalem, such as is referred to in Isa. iv. 3; this is transferred to a roll of the names of God's people kept by God Himself, such as Moses has in view in his prayer, 'And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written' (Exod. xxxii. 32). So in Ps. lxix. 28 we read, 'Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written with the righteous.' This idea plays a great part in Jewish apocalyptic literature, in which it is developed to include the deeds as well as the names of God's people in the heavenly record. It is found frequently in the N. T., e. g. Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3, and in Rev. xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, 15.

I will confess his name. The connexion with the words of Jesus recorded in Matt. x. 32, Luke xii. 8, is unmistakable. It does not follow, however, that we have a quotation from a written gospel; it may be derived from reminiscence or oral tradition of what he said.

iii. 7-13. *Letter to the church at Philadelphia.*

7. Philadelphia: twenty-eight miles south-east from Sardis, 'rather a rich and powerful city, connected by trade with a large district towards the east and north, for which it formed a centre, and thus well situated to become one of the central churches of Christianized Asia' (Ramsay). One of the Letters of Ignatius was addressed to Philadelphia, and from it, as from this Epistle, we gather that the condition of this church was satisfactory.

he that is holy: used here only in Revelation of Christ: elsewhere (e. g. Rev. vi. 10, also in combination with 'he that

that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and none
8 shall shut, and that shutteth, and none openeth: I know
thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened,
which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and
didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name.
9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them which

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is true') it is specifically an attribute of the Most High; as in the O. T. (Job vi. 10; Isa. xl. 25, and Hab. iii. 3).

he that is true. There is a distinction between this word and the one commonly translated 'true' (see Trench, *Synonyms*), corresponding to the distinction between 'genuine' and 'truthful.' It is not, however, necessary to press the distinction here, beyond observing the suitableness of the epithet 'genuine' to him who had described himself as 'the Truth.'

the key of David: cf. i. 14. The phrase comes down from Isa. xxii. 22, 'And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.' Christ 'is as a son over his house,' i. e. the house of God (Heb. iii. 6, R. V. marg.); it is he who admits to, and he who excludes from, the household of faith, the community of God's people.

8. a door opened: this may be understood of (1) Entrance into eternal life; (2) entrance into God's kingdom to be established upon earth; or (3) entrance into a field of successful missionary activity. As the last is the sense in 1 Cor. xvi. 9, 2 Cor. ii. 12, and Col. iv. 3, it is probably the meaning here.

none can shut will then mean that the efforts of the opponents of the gospel, probably the Jews, will be vain.

that thou hast a little power. The rendering of the R. V. assumes that this clause is the object of 'I know'—explanatory of 'thy works.' It is better to understand—'because little is the strength that thou hast,' and to take the clause as an explanation of the Lord's consideration for their state, insomuch that he actually opens the door through which their duty calls upon them to press.

and didst keep: i. e. 'and yet hast kept, although thy strength is little.'

9. I give of the synagogue of Satan. The construction is interrupted, and the sentence taken up again in a slightly different form with 'I will make.' The phrase, 'synagogue of Satan' (cf. ii. 9), probably arises through the sarcastic alteration of the title which these false worshippers claimed for themselves, viz. 'Synagogue of the Lord'—for this is the Greek rendering of say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou didst 10 keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that *hour* which is to come upon the

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'assembly' or 'congregation' 'of the Lord' in Num. xx. 4, xxxi. 16.

which say they are Jews, and they are not. The situation at Philadelphia is plainly parallel to that at Smyrna. The difficulties and sufferings of the Christians are due to the persecution of those who, though Jews by blood, do not deserve the noble name.

come and worship before thy feet. The phrasing of the thought is derived from Isa. xlv. 14, as may be seen in the English Version, but is yet more evident from the LXX. Observe how the Christian church has taken the place of Sion as the inheritor of these promises, while the Jews, to whom these promises first were made, fall back into the position of the enemies of God's people.

and to know: cf. Isa. xlix. 23. The Divine judgements have an educative purpose; they serve to convince men of their true relation to God: Ezek. v. 13, vi. 7, 13, vii. 4.

that I have loved thee: this also is transferred from Israel to the church of Christ; see Isa. xliii. 4; Mal. i. 2.

10. The sense is practically the same whether we render, **the word of my patience** (cf. 2 Thess. iii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 6), or 'my word of patience.' Christ had been at once the inculcator and the great example of endurance, enduring the Cross and despising the shame.

I also will keep thee. The wording is emphatic: 'I, on my side, will do the same for thee,' viz. 'keep.' The reward of 'keeping' is being kept; cf. John xvii. 11, 12, 15.

the hour of trial: A. V. 'temptation.' The same word is translated 'temptation' in the Lord's Prayer, and in Jas. i. 2, 1 Pet. i. 6, &c. Trials arising from persecution were among the severest temptations which beset the early Christians, threatening to shake their faith and undermine their loyalty to Christ. This, the evident character of the 'trials' mentioned here, necessarily limits the reference to those among 'them that dwell upon the earth,' who were believers in Christ. This is the first indication in the book of an approaching general persecution, the revelation of which culminates in chap. xiii. 'The prophecy is remarkably characteristic of the prevailing tone of the Apocalypse: it is the tone of immediate expectation of the end: the last great struggle

11 whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I
come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no
12 one take thy crown. He that overcometh, I will make
him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go
out thence no more: and I will write upon him the
name of my God, and the name of the city of my God,
the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven
13 from my God, and mine own new name. He that hath

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throughout the whole inhabited world is at hand; the storm is drawing near; already the Seer beholds the lightning flash' (Bousset).

11. I come quickly. The 'coming,' which was for judgement to the false teachers in Pergamum (ii. 16), is for deliverance to the faithful at Philadelphia. The two aspects are combined in xxii. 12; cf. also xxii. 7, 20.

hold fast. So in the Letter to Thyatira, ii. 25.

thy crown. See on ii. 10; the crown is the reward of victorious endurance reserved for them in heaven.

12. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. The special reward of the victor, in this case, is to receive a position of permanence and usefulness in the glorified sanctuary of the future. The figure is probably derived from the description in 1 Kings vii. 22 of the great pillars in Solomon's temple; cf. Jer. i. 18; also Gal. ii. 9.

of my God. Christ speaks thus of the Father also in John xx. 17.

I will write upon him. The Greek might equally well mean 'upon it,' i. e. upon the pillar; but the A. V. and R. V. are probably correct in understanding that it is the victor who receives the names upon his forehead, as in xiv. 1, xxii. 4. The idea may be traced to Isa. lvi. 5, 'Unto them will I give . . . a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.' Cf. Isa. lxii. 2. 'As the name of God signifies belonging to Him, so the name of the city of Jerusalem signifies the right of citizenship therein.'

the new Jerusalem. More fully described in xxi. 2. In Gal. iv. 26 it is 'the Jerusalem that is above.'

my . . . new name. The victor receives three names: the name of God, for whose pleasure he was created; the name of the new society of the redeemed, to which he eternally belongs; and the name of Christ, in that revelation of himself in glory which is necessarily concealed from those who still dwell in this world; cf. xix. 12, 16.

an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write; 14
These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true
witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know 15

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iii. 14–22. *Letter to the church at Laodicea.*

14. The circle of the seven churches is completed by Laodicea, situated to the south-east of Philadelphia and the east of Ephesus, in the valley of the Lycus, and only a few miles from Colossæ. This close neighbourhood explains Paul's allusion to the church at Laodicea in his Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 15, 16). The history and characteristics of the place are well brought out by Prof. Ramsay: 'Laodicea was a small city until after the Roman period had begun; then it rapidly became great and rich. Destroyed by an earthquake in A. D. 60, it disdained to seek help from the liberality of the emperor, as many of the greatest cities of Asia had done. Hence its boast, Rev. iii. 17, "I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing." It was renowned for the beautiful glossy black wool of its sheep, and carried on a great trade in garments manufactured from this wool. Owing to its central position at the point where the great trade-route from the East was joined by several branch roads . . . it became a centre of banking and financial transactions. Hence, Rev. iii. 18, "I counsel thee (not to take the gold of thy bankers, but) to buy of me gold refined by fire, and (not the glossy black garments made in the city, but) white garments."'

the Amen. In Isa. lxv. 16 God is called, in the Hebrew (see R. V. marg.), 'the God of Amen.' The force of the description is the same as when Christ says of himself, 'I am the Truth.'

the faithful and true witness. This phrase is taken from i. 5, with the addition of 'true,' which occurs as an epithet of Christ in iii. 7. There is special significance in this appeal to the Lord's authority, as 'a teacher sent from God,' in this Letter where he is to demand so complete a change of mind; cf. John xviii. 37.

the beginning of the creation of God. This is a variation from the description in i. 5, 'the firstborn of the dead,' but finds its parallel in Col. i. 15, 18, 'the firstborn of all creation.' Here, however, 'beginning' signifies not merely the first to be created, but the incipient principle, or source, as in Prov. viii. 22. Neither can the phrase 'be limited to the thought of the mere material creation, as if equivalent to the statement that by the Word all things were made. It would thus fail to correspond with the two appellations preceding it, which undoubtedly apply to the work of

thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would
16 thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm,
and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my

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redemption, while at the same time the addition of the words "of God" would be meaningless or perplexing . . . We shall not be able to resist the conviction that the words before us refer primarily to the new creation, the Christian church, that redeemed humanity which has its true life in Christ. It is not necessary indeed to exclude the thought of the material creation; but in so far as it is alluded to, it is only as redeemed, in its final condition of rest and glory' (Milligan).

15. thy works here, as before, signify character as manifested in conduct.

that thou art neither cold nor hot. The epithets, particularly that rendered 'hot,' are such as are peculiarly suitable to water; and the figure in the following verse is based upon the nauseating effect of water that is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. The condition represented by the word 'cold' is the extreme opposite of the spiritual fervour and zeal signified by 'hot,' i. e. something more than mere 'spiritual coldness.' What we so describe was precisely the condition in which the Laodiceans were, a condition of lukewarmness to which either extreme would have been preferable. The principle underlying such a statement is the same as we find expressed in Matt. xxi. 31, 'Verily I say unto you (the priests and the elders of the people), that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' The dawn seems sometimes to be the enemy of the day. Better than a comparative warmth, with which men are apt to rest content, would be the absolute cold which would impel them to seek the Sun of Righteousness.

16. They who can be thus described are looked on with a kind of abhorrence by the Lord. Their judgement corresponds to that threatened against Ephesus, where also there had been a falling away from the first love. In both cases it is dismissal, but here dismissal with disgust. 'Degradation it were and ruin to become an abhorring unto all flesh: unspeakable degradation, ruin unutterable, to become Christ's abhorrence. We must recollect what did not suffice to make men so, before we can in the least estimate what consummate loathsomeness it is which will suffice. To be dead sufficed not, for all whom he hath quickened were dead in trespasses and sins. To lie in wickedness sufficed not, for the whole world lieth in wickedness, and he came not to condemn the world but to save the world. To be his enemies sufficed not, for we were his enemies when he reconciled us to God by his death. To crucify him sufficed not, for he interceded for his

mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten 17
riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that
thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and
blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold 18
refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white
garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the
shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and

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crucifiers' (C. Rossetti). Cf. also Dante's description of the Laodicean temper—

> 'Questo misero modo
> Tengon l' anime triste di coloro
> Che visser senza infamia e senza lodo.
> Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
> Degli angeli che non furon ribelli
> Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sè foro.' (*Inferno*, iii. 34.)

17. I am rich, and have gotten riches. For the historical basis of this self-description see on verse 14. Arrogance and self-sufficiency had produced a spirit in this church the exact contrary of that humility to which Jesus had given his benediction and his promise (Matt. v. 3).

thou: emphatic; 'thou of all others art the wretched and the pitiable one.'

18. I counsel thee to buy. Isa. lv. 1 ('Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price') affords a close parallel, and further shews that the 'buying' is figurative for obtaining, not by purchase, but on the usual conditions of the Divine bounty—'let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.'

The things to be thus sought and obtained correspond to the needs just laid bare—riches for poverty, clothing for nakedness, means of cure for blindness. The word translated 'ointment' describes rather the cylindrical form in which the medicated ointment was made up, and the use of this technical name suggests the possibility that there was at Laodicea some special ointment passing under this name, with which the spiritual ointment is contrasted, as the 'refined gold' with the earthly treasure, and the white garments with the black robes of the market.

'Here is no need of a busy search, a tiresome indagation, a chaining together of consequences. The soul hath its clothing, its vestment of light, upon as cheap terms as the lilies theirs; and yet Solomon in all the glory of his famed wisdom was not arrayed like it' (John Howe).

19 eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As
many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous
20 therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and
knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I
will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with

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19. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten. The word translated 'reprove' (A. V. 'rebuke') is used in this sense in John iii. 20, 'lest his works should be reproved'; cf. John xvi. 5. The thought is found in Prov. iii. 12, 'whom the Lord loveth he reproveth': cf. Heb. xii. 6; Job v. 17. But, once more, what in the O.T. is ascribed to Jehovah is here simply transferred to Christ. The word rendered 'chastise' signifies properly 'train,' or 'educate'; then, 'discipline with a view to training'; finally, the word acquires its special meaning from the fact that, through the folly or the obstinacy of the pupil, the training has so often to be through pain—

'They that see the Father's face do not fear His hand.'

be zealous therefore: zeal is the direct opposite of lukewarmness; it is demanded as a continuous temper, which has its commencement in an act of repentance or change of mind.

20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. The picture seems to be based on the well-known verse in the Song of Solomon (v. 2); and, if so, we have the beginning of the spiritual interpretation of the Song in terms of the relation of Christ to the soul. Observe the sudden change of address from the church—the corporate unity of Christians at Laodicea—to the individual, each individual to whom this Letter might come. Christ stands outside the heart of every one who hears of him, pleading for entrance. The knocking is heard in the inarticulate summons of each Divine providence, rousing attention to the Presence without. The knocking is followed by the voice, in which he 'calleth his sheep by name,' or answers the question of the startled soul, 'It is I.'

if any man hear my voice. Cf. John x. 4 and 27, 'My sheep hear my voice.'

I will come in to him. So John xiv. 23, 'we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

and will sup with him, and he with me. Christ himself is at once *hospes atque epulum*, 'host and feast'—the giver of the feast and the Bread of Life (cf. John vi. 54 ff.).

'Blessed it were to break our fast with Christ, and strengthened by that meat to pursue our journey of however many days and nights to the mount of God. Blessed it were to dine with him, and start refreshed to follow him across the storm-beaten

me. He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down 21
with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down
with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let 22
him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened 4

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sands of this troublesome world. But to sup with him is to end our day with him in beatitude of final perseverance' (C. Rossetti).

The repetition, with inversion of idea, recalls many similar expressions in the Fourth Gospel; see John vi. 56, xiv. 20, xv. 4, 5, xvii. 21, 23, 26. The diction and the thought of the verse alike are full of elusive echoes of the gospel, all the more striking that they cannot be recognized as direct quotations.

21. I will give to him to sit down with me. We find here a combination of ideas which are found lying apart in the Synoptic narrative and in the Fourth Gospel. In the latter (John xvii. 24), we have the announcement, 'I will that, where I am, they also may be with me'; and in Luke xxii. 30, 'ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'; cf. Matt. xix. 28.

as I also overcame. This comparing of his own experience with that of his disciples, even if on a different plane, is again characteristic of Christ as he is presented in the Fourth Gospel.

The greatness and the splendour of this promise cannot be associated with any specific quality in the Laodicean church: rather does it seem to stand here as a climax to all the other promises, and to have a forward glance to the vision of the next chapters, and especially to that of the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

iv—v. THE VISION OF ETERNAL REALITIES IN HEAVEN.

The instruction given to the Seer in i. 19 was threefold. He was to write (1) the things which he had seen; (2) the things which are; and (3) the things which shall be hereafter. The first instruction he fulfilled in chap. i; the third is carried out in chap. vi to the end; in chaps. ii–v he describes the things which are. These four chapters again fall into two sections, the first of which, consisting of the Letters to the churches (chaps. ii, iii), serves to depict their situation, and through them, as typical, the situation of the whole church on earth. As a counterpart to these two chapters we have now in chaps. iv, v a description of the situation in heaven, a presentation of those eternal facts and relations in dependence upon which the hidden book of human history is to be unrolled. Closer observation will display a further distinction between chaps. iv and v, a distinction which is most marked in the climax to which they severally lead. In both cases it is a burst of adoring praise,

in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must come to pass
2 hereafter. Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold,

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but in chap. iv this proceeds only from beings of another order than human, and is addressed to the Lord God Almighty, the Creator. In chap. v, on the other hand, the praise of these same beings is addressed to the Lamb, the Redeemer, on the ground of his redeeming work (v. 9), and the chorus is swelled by the addition of human voices, from 'every creature which is . . . on the earth.' The centre of worship in the one chapter is God the Creator; in the other, God the Redeemer.

iv. 1–11. *The vision of creative majesty in heaven.* This chapter should be carefully compared with the passages in the O. T., where a like vision is described, and especially with Isa. vi. 1–4; Ezek. i. 24–28; Dan. vii. 9–10. From such comparison it will appear how much of the imagery is traditional. A similar comparison with the foregoing chapters of this book will shew the close relation between the sections. Both the thought and the language are closely interwoven, too much so to admit of separate sources.

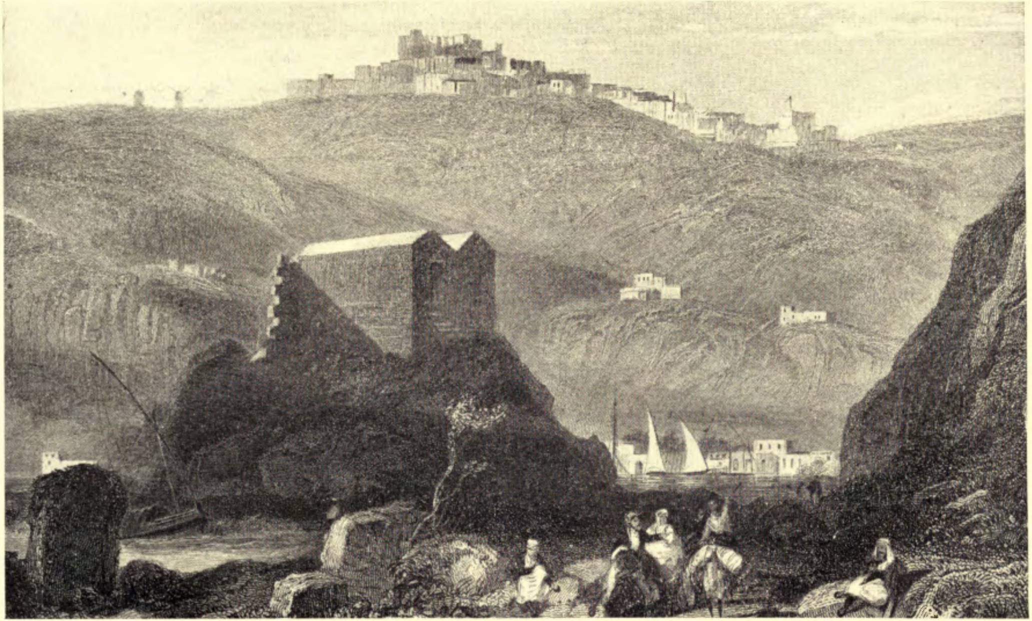
1. After these things. This phrase, which recurs in vii. 8, 9, xv. 5, xviii. 1, and xix. 1, marks in each case one of the more important divisions of the book. It is not necessary to assume an interval of time more or even less considerable, but merely a well-marked stage in the progress of the revelation.

behold, a door opened in heaven. John probably means his readers to understand a door in the sky, which would be conceived of by him and by them as a solid vault. This door he now saw standing open, and giving access to the heavenly places.

and the first voice which I heard: better, 'the former voice which I had heard,' for even R. V. does not make it perfectly clear that the reference is to the voice of i. 10, the voice he had heard at the first. If it was the Son of Man who spoke then, it must be the same now.

the things which must come to pass. There is plainly a connexion of thought here with i. 19; the promise begins to find its fulfilment with the opening of the first Seal (vi. 1).

2. Straightway I was in the Spirit. The repetition of this phrase, which has already occurred in i. 10, has caused unnecessary difficulty. It has been thought to indicate forgetfulness on the part of the writer of what he has already stated, or, by others, the presence of a new document. But we must not force upon



Drawing by J. D. Harding

PATMOS

there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat *was* to look upon like a 3
jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon.

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the Apocalypse a logical precision which is alien to the character of the composition. Seeing that 'being in the Spirit' was a condition of receiving the revelation, it was only natural that John should connect a further revelation, either with a further accession of spiritual ecstasy, or with a repetition of the initial experience.

and behold, there was a throne set in heaven. Ezek. x. 1, 'And behold, in the firmament that was over the head of the cherubim, there appeared above them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne'; cf. also Ezek. i. 26; Dan. vii. As with the door in heaven, so with the throne, it is already and eternally there. The clearing of the prophet's vision only serves to display its presence.

and one sitting upon the throne. It adds to the mysterious dignity of the scene that John does not name him 'that sitteth upon the throne.' In Isaiah it is 'the Lord, high and lifted up'; in Ezekiel, 'a likeness as the appearance of a man'; in Daniel, 'one that was ancient of days did sit.' It is the Eternal Father who is enthroned, distinguished in verse 5 from the Spirit, and in vi. 16, vii. 10, from the Son, and described expressly as 'God which sitteth upon the throne' in vii. 10, xix. 4.

3. a jasper stone and a sardius. The jasper is referred to as one of the stones of the high-priest's breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 20), as forming the battlements of the ideal Sion (Isa. liv. 12, LXX), and in Rev. xxi. 11 as 'a stone most precious, . . . clear as crystal.' From these passages it would seem to denote not our jasper of to-day, which is neither very costly nor translucent, but some other stone, possibly the diamond, or, as Dr. Cheyne thinks, the opal, 'which by its brilliance and play of colour has always been one of the most attractive of the precious stones, and in its choicest variety deserves in the highest degree the description in Rev. xxi. 11.' The sardius, on the other hand, probably answers to our cornelian, being opaque, and of a deep dull red, the colour of fire or blood.

and there was **a rainbow round about the throne.** Ezek. i. 27, 'and from the appearance of his loins and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.' The bow must be conceived as arching over the throne, like the vertical nimbus of sacred art, not as a horizontal ring.

like an emerald to look upon. It is in its shape and

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their

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significance rather than in its prismatic colours that the bow resembles the natural rainbow. The emerald green colour suggests the freshness and the fertility which follow on 'the day of rain' (see the quotation from Ezekiel), and, metaphorically, the 'seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.'

4. And round about the throne were **four and twenty thrones.** The rendering in the A. V. obscures the fact that the same word is used of the one and of the twenty-four. These must be imaged as set in a half-circle—twelve on either side of the central throne.

four and twenty elders. Before making any attempt to explain the significance of these much discussed figures, it will be well to observe what we are told concerning them in the text. (1) They occupy thrones which are set in a circle, or a semi-circle, round the throne of the Most High. (2) They wear white garments, and have crowns of gold upon their heads. Both these features suggest royal dignity and authority. (3) They are called 'elders,' in the Greek 'presbyters.' (4) They are four and twenty in number. We find further (iv. 9) that they fall down and worship 'him that sitteth upon the throne,' and cast their crowns before the throne. In verse 8 they, together with the living creatures, fall down in like manner before the Lamb; they have harps and golden bowls full of incense; they take part in singing the new song, and also in the worship of God described in v. 14, xi. 16, xix. 4. Finally, one of their number, who is addressed by the Seer as 'my Lord' (vii. 14, see below), explains to him 'who these are' that are arrayed in white robes.

Almost all commentators have found in these figures glorified human beings, who are found occupying this position as, in some sense or other, representative of the church. Speculation as to who or what they represent is governed by the meaning assigned to the number 'four and twenty.' (1) It has been supposed by Ewald, Hilgenfeld, and others that the conception starts from the four and twenty classes or courses of priests which are enumerated in 1 Chron. xxiv. But these elders are not priests. The only features which point that way are the white robes—which are equally characteristic of regal and of priestly dignity—and the holding of bowls of incense, 'which are the prayers of the saints.' But as they are only said to 'hold,' or 'have,' these bowls, it is only an inference that they present them, and this heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceed 5

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again is not necessarily a priestly action. On the other hand, neither the 'thrones' nor the 'crowns' harmonize with the priestly character; they point rather to the regal. (2) The number has been understood by Bleek, Weizsäcker, and others as formed by the doubling of the number 'twelve,' with a view to symbolizing the complete church, made up of the twelve tribes of the O. T. and a corresponding number from the N. T. church. Carrying this explanation a step further, others have seen an allusion to the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Twelve Apostles. But none of these explanations is better than a guess, and they are all open to the objection that the idea of the church of Christ, as formed by a combination of the O. T. church and the New, is not primitive, but mediæval. The relevant fact most conspicuously present to the mind of the early church was that Christ had made both one. Even xxi. 12, 14 does not prove the contrary, as the names of the twelve tribes are on the *gates*, and those of the apostles on the the twelve *foundations*. Were the two indeed co-ordinated, there would have been twenty-four gates, or twenty-four foundations.

The difficulty of finding any satisfactory explanation of these figures, as representative human beings, suggests the question whether they belong to this order at all. That this is a vision of the things 'that are' precludes any interpretation in the light of Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 28 ff., where the reference is to what is to take place 'in the regeneration,' at the final crisis of judgement. And since the other figures in this scene, the 'living creatures,' belong undoubtedly to the order of heavenly beings, antecedent probability lies with those who, like Spitta and Gunkel, maintain that the elders also belong to this order—that they are angels. From Isa. xxiv. 23 we learn that the name of 'elders' (E. V. 'ancients') was given to certain angelic beings, who seem to have been conceived as a kind of Divine consistory assembled in the presence of God. Confirmation of this is found in the lately-discovered *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, where we read (iv. 1), 'And they brought before my face the elders and the rulers of the orders of the stars'; and in the *Judgement of Peter* (Hilgenfeld, *Nov. Test.* 102 f.), 'For there are four and twenty elders, twelve upon the right hand and twelve upon the left.' We ought, therefore, to see in these 'elders,' in all probability, a group of angelic beings, whose presence in the heavenly temple was part of the ancient Jewish tradition on the subject. Cf. Col. i. 16, where 'thrones' probably refers to the same class of angels. On the whole question of the Jewish doctrine of 'Angels' the student should consult the article in Hastings'

lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are
6 the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne, as it were a glassy sea like unto crystal; and in the midst of

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Dictionary of the Bible, and, if possible, Weber's *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 162–177.

5. lightnings and voices and thunders. So also xi. 19, xvi. 18, vii. 5. The lightnings and thunders are connected with the presence of God in Exod. xix. 16; to which the Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 19) adds 'the voice of words' working fear in the hearts of those who heard.

seven lamps of fire . . . which are the seven Spirits of God. See i. 4, and note. As the unity of the church on earth, realized through diversity, is symbolized by the seven lamp-stands (i. 16), so the unity of the Spirit in all the diversity of his operation is symbolized by these seven 'torches' which burn continually before the throne.

6. and before the throne, as it were a glassy sea like unto crystal. The picture is, 'what looked like a sea of glass, so smooth and calm it was, and, moreover, not dull and opaque, as most ancient glass was, but bright and glittering like rock crystal.'

The origin of this conception of a 'sea' or stream before the Throne of God lies far back in Hebrew thought. In Gen. i. 7 we find 'the waters that were above the firmament' answering to the waters that were below it. Beyond these upper waters, therefore, lay the Throne of God. Thus in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* the Seer beholds in the first heaven above the other 'a very great sea, greater than the sea on earth.' According to the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* ('Levi'), this sea lies between the first and the second heavens (Bousset). And so, in the Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* we read: 'He took me and brought me thither where are the battlements of heaven, and where there is a stream which no one is able to pass over.'

It is at least probable that this conception of the heavenly sea was what was symbolized by the 'molten sea' which stood in Solomon's temple (1 Kings vii. 23, 39; 2 Kings xvi. 17) 'on the right side of the house, eastward towards the south.' When the smoothness and the beauty of this interspace were emphasized rather than its likeness to the sea, we have it described as a 'paved work of sapphire stone, as it were the very heaven for clearness' (Exod. xxiv. 10); cf. Ezek. i. 22; Job xxxvii. 18.

There is no need to seek for a symbolic meaning for this sea; its value in the picture will be sufficiently understood as serving to enhance the majesty and splendour of the scene.

and in the midst of the throne, and round about the

the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first 7

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throne. The simplest way to understand this difficult collocation of ideas is to suppose that the living creatures are seen supporting the throne, one of them in the middle of each side, and so all of them round about it.

four living creatures (so R. V. in place of the most unsuitable rendering of A. V. 'beasts'). The word properly means simply, 'living things.' There can be no doubt that the writer derived his description of these figures from the vision of Ezekiel (see especially chap. i), where four 'living creatures' support 'the likeness of a firmament,' above which there is 'a likeness of a throne,' and upon the likeness of the throne a 'likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.' On comparing this passage with Ezek. x. 1, 20 we find that these 'living creatures' are identical with the 'cherubim'; the four living creatures of the Revelation also are four cherubim. What further significance is to be attached to them as such, it is very difficult to say. 'The Jews regarded them as supernatural beings, without attempting to define them.' It is possible that they represented, if not originally, in course of time, a fourfold division of animal nature into birds, cattle, wild beasts, and men. Behind this there may have been some dim conception of the forces of Nature. The main thing is to observe how frequently they are introduced as the supporters or vehicles of the Divine power. Cf. 2 Kings xix. 15; Pss. lxxx. 1, xcix. 1; Isa. xxxvii. 16. 'To the Hebrew poet the cherubim were not only the attendants of Jehovah, but the bearers and upholders of His throne. The thunderclouds are the dark wings of these ministers of God. They bear Him up. And to this, which is the picture presented by the service of the mute forces of nature, there is an analogy presented by the service of God's people. Hence the earthly correlative to "thou that sittest upon the cherubim" is "thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."' See Bishop Ryle's article 'Cherubim' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

full of eyes before and behind. In verse 8 it is repeated that they are 'all round and within' full of eyes: in Ezekiel (x. 12), 'their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about.' The meaning is the same here, the description is abbreviated; they have eyes everywhere, symbolizing their unsleeping watchfulness, as they observe and reflect on all sides the Divine majesty of creation.

7. The vision here departs from that in Ezekiel, inasmuch as there each of the cherubim has four faces, and it is the faces

creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and
8 the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the

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that resemble those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Here there is only one face to each living creature, and apparently the likeness is not confined to the countenance, but extends to the whole body.

The traditional association of these four figures with the Four Evangelists is wholly fanciful, and yet it has influenced many forms of Christian art since very early times. 'The same mysterious emblem of Ezekiel was constantly applied to the Evangelists in later times throughout the Christian world, but generally as modified in the Apocalypse, where the idea of individual life prevails over that of common being. Yet, while the early Fathers agreed in the general explanation of the vision, they differed widely in details. In the West the interpretation of Jerome gained almost universal currency, and in later times has been confirmed by the usage of art. According to this, the man is assigned to Matthew, the lion to Mark, the ox to Luke, and the eagle to John, as typifying respectively the human, active, sacrificial, and spiritual sides of the gospel.' (Westcott, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 249.)

like a calf. There is no necessity for limiting the meaning of this word. It may be equally well, and here better, translated, 'ox.'

8. having each one of them six wings. The source of the imagery now changes from Ezekiel to Isaiah. To the cherubim are given the wings which specially characterize the seraphs (Isa. vi. 2). Any distinction which may have originally been felt between cherubim and seraphim has now disappeared; cf. *Book of Enoch*, lxxi. 6 f., 'And round about were cherubim and seraphim and ophanim; these are they who sleep not, but watch the Throne of His glory.'

they have no rest. In addition to the above cf. *Book of Enoch*, xxxix. 12, 'They praise Thee who never sleep.' From this a certain class of angels is in the *Book of Enoch* frequently referred to as the 'watchers'; cf. Dan. iv. 13, 'a watcher and an holy one,' and Dr. Driver's note.

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty. The Trisagion is first found in Isa. vi. 3. For 'Lord of Hosts' there we have here 'Almighty,' as in i. 8, following the LXX rendering

Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come. And when the living creatures shall 9 give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, the four 10 and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to 11 receive the glory and the honour and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

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of 'Lord of Hosts.' In the *Book of Enoch*, xxxix. 12, the Trisagion appears with a different conclusion: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Spirits; He fills the earth with Spirits.'

which was and which is and which is to come. Cf. i. 8.

9. And when the living creatures shall give. The sense of the future tense is probably frequentative—'Whenever the living creatures give glory.' It is theirs to give the signal, whereupon the other heavenly powers join in with their worship, kingly though they are, casting their crowns before the King of Kings, leaving their thrones to prostrate themselves before Him, and breaking into the great hymn of praise for creation.

11. all things. The universal whole, the universe.

because of thy will: i. e. because thou didst will it. '"For *thy* pleasure" of the A. V. introduces an element entirely strange to the context, and, however true in fact, most inappropriate here' (Alford).

they were, and were created. If there is any distinction to be drawn between these two ideas, it must be that the first presents the simple fact of their existence (cf. Acts xvii. 28, 'have our being,' a translation of the same verb), while the second emphasizes their existence as created.

'In the song of praise here put into their mouths they have not yet advanced to the thought of salvation. That is reserved for the next chapter. Here they think of creation and all its wonders: of the heavens which declare God's glory, and the firmament which shews forth His handiwork; of sun, and moon, and stars in their manifold and resplendent glories; of the mountains and the valleys; of the rivers and the fountains of waters; of the rich exuberance of vegetable life which covers the earth with a gorgeous carpet of every hue; and of all those animals upon its

5 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close

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surface which "run races in their mirth": and for them they praise. In Him they live and move and have their being. Because of His will they *were*—let the reading be considered and remembered: "were," not "are"—because of His will they were in His idea from all eternity; and when the appointed moment came, they *were created.* Wherefore let them praise' (Milligan).

v. 1–14. Description of 'the Things that are' in Heaven continued.

This chapter is a counterpart or complement to the foregoing. The two moments of Divine activity in relation to men are Creation and Redemption; and to the description of the eternal adoration of the Almighty Creator in heaven now follows a description of the adoration of the Lamb as Redeemer. But both creation and redemption have a future as well as a past: He who created all things 'through His will' is yet to make new heavens and a new earth; and so he who has already purchased men unto God has still a work to carry out in the application of redemption to human history. And this is the central thought of the fifth chapter, though its climax is the hymn of praise to the Redeemer-Lamb. The future is in the hand of him that once was slain. And the token thereof is that he alone has power to open the book that contains its secrets.

v. 1–7. *The sealed book.*

1. And I saw in the right hand: better, 'upon the right hand.' The book thus held out is free to be taken and opened by any one who is worthy.

a book. It is not easy to decide in what form this book is to be imaged, whether as a volume made up of separate leaves, like our modern books, or as a continuous roll, such as was the common form in antiquity. Were it the latter, it would of course be easier to understand how it was sealed with seven seals, along the outside edge; on the other hand, it would be difficult to represent to oneself how the opening of these seals in succession could effect the opening of successive parts of the book. The opening of the seals would, however, be meaningless, unless it were somehow connected with the progressive unfolding of the contents of the book. These are plainly intended to be recognized in the events which follow on the opening of each seal. This difficulty is not met by Alford's argument. If the contents of the book are not to be made known until 'those material events which mark the gradual opening of God's purposes are all past,' if, that is to say,

sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel 2
proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open
the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no one in 3
the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able
to open the book, or to look thereon. And I wept 4
much, because no one was found worthy to open the
book, or to look thereon: and one of the elders saith 5

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all that follows in this Book of Revelation is but preliminary to the reading of the sealed book, its introduction here will be quite incomprehensible. It is tempting, therefore, to suppose, with Spitta and others, that the book consists of leaves of parchment, each pair of which is fastened together with a seal, the seal possibly depending from a cord. But it is probably unwise to push our curiosity very far in such directions. It is the total impression that is of importance, and that is of a book having for its contents the judgements of God, 'the things which are to be hereafter,' which are successively displayed through the successive opening of the seals.

written within and on the back. Books so written were not unknown in antiquity, as may be seen from references to them in classical literature. In these cases the practice was prompted by the desire to make all possible use of the valuable parchment. Here, however, the feature suggests the fullness and minuteness of the Divine foreknowledge of events. It is useless to speculate as to how the writer knew that it was so—he knew it later if he did not see it at the time: that he did know it, however, shews that at one time or other the open book was displayed to his sight.

2. Who is worthy . . . ? The question recalls a similar one put in a like scene, Isa. vi. 8, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' That the voice in the one case is 'of the Lord,' and in the other 'of a strong angel,' is consistent with the disposition in later times to emphasize the transcendence of God.

3. in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth. The phrase may be used in a proverbial way to express, in the strongest possible form, 'no one whatever'; if the literal meaning is to be pressed, the last clause, 'under the earth,' must be understood of the dwellers in the underworld, the dead. In Phil. ii. 10 the same language is used in the prediction of the universal worship to be paid to Jesus.

4. And I wept much. The reason of the Seer's grief, that no one came forward to open the book, must be found in his fear lest the promise that he should be shewn things to come might fail, in the absence of one worthy to open the book.

unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the
tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to
6 open the book and the seven seals thereof. And I saw
in the midst of the throne and of the four living

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5. the Lion . . . of the tribe of Judah. The phrases here used to describe the Lamb shew the writer's familiarity with Messianic prophecy, as it was understood by the Jews, while his designation of the new figure as the Lamb proves his profound apprehension of the interpretation of the Messianic hope revealed in and by Jesus Christ. It is generally agreed that this first phrase is derived from the blessing of his sons by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 9), 'Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up.' That the Jews interpreted this as a prophecy of the Messiah is seen from such a passage as the Midrash, *Jalkut Schimeoni*, which says, commenting on this verse, 'that is Messiah, the son of David, for he shall go forth from two tribes. His father descends from Judah, his mother from Dan. And both tribes bear the name of "Lion."'

'He looked to see a Lion, and beheld a Lamb. He looked to see power and force, whereby the foes of his faith should be destroyed, and he saw love and gentleness by which they should be conquered, by being transformed into friends. The might of Christ is the power of love. The captive train which he leads in his triumphal march is composed of those who are bound to him by the golden chains of love and gratitude. The Lamb, as though it had been slain, stands in the midst of God's throne. At the heart of God's sovereignty is sacrificial and suffering love' (Stevens).

the Root of David. The source of this phrase is found in Isa. xi. 1, 10, 'And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek.' 'Root' is used here, as in the second of these passages, of what is properly described in Isa. xi. 1 as a 'shoot,' i. e. a branch or sucker coming up from an ancient root. In like manner Christ says of himself, xxii. 16, 'I am the root and the offspring of David.'

hath overcome, to open. The modification in the R. V. marks the fact that the word 'overcome' is to be taken absolutely, as in ii. 7, 11, &c. What is said is that Christ has won a victory, and the result is that he is empowered to open the book. He himself overcame before he calls upon his disciples to do the like; cf. iii. 21.

6. in the midst of the throne. Not, of course, on the throne, creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of

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but in front of it, at its middle point, and so also in the midst of the elders and of the cherubim.

a Lamb. It is remarkable that the word used for 'Lamb' is, so far as the N. T. is concerned, one peculiar to Revelation. It is a diminutive and a neuter; but no distinction of meaning can be drawn between it and that used elsewhere of Christ (John i. 29, 36; Acts viii. 32, translation of Isaiah; 1 Pet. i. 19). Touching the figure—'all the references in the New Testament to the Lamb of God (with which the corresponding allusions to the passover are interwoven) spring from the passage in the book of Isaiah' (Delitzsch). 'As a lamb to the slaughter is led, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, he opened not his mouth.' Down to the time of their controversy with the Christians, the Jews commonly interpreted this as a prophecy of the Messiah; and it is possible that in some of their literature, not yet in our hands, connecting links may be found between this picture and the sudden appearance of the phrase in the N. T. as a title of the Messiah. In the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* ('Joseph') there is a passage which, though probably of Christian origin, is interesting as bringing together ideas which also meet here: 'And I saw that out of Judah a virgin was born . . . and out of her proceeded a lamb without blemish, and on his left hand as a lion, and all the beasts fell upon him, and the lamb overcame them.'

standing, as though it had been slain: the Greek word suggests 'slain in sacrifice.' The Lamb had upon him still the marks of the wounds by which he had been slain (John xx. 25, 27), and yet stood in the position of a living creature, being indeed one 'that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore.'

seven horns, and seven eyes. The traditional and metaphorical significance of these was so familiar that the physical image would be quite subordinate for the writer, and give him no perplexity. 'Horns' stand for power (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 10; Pss. cxii. 9, cxlviii. 14; Dan. vii. 7, 20), and 'eyes' for insight and intelligence (Zech. iii. 10; Rev. iv. 6, 8). That there are seven in each case signifies that both the power and the intelligence were Divinely perfect and complete. The eyes are identified with the 'seven spirits' (cf. i. 4, iv. 5), which represent the active and all-pervasive wisdom of God. 'As the seven burning lamps before the throne represented the Spirit of God immanent in the Godhead, so the seven eyes of the Lamb represent the same Spirit in his sevenfold perfection, profluent, so to speak, from the incarnate Redeemer; busied in his world-wide and world-long energy: the

7 God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came, and
he taketh *it* out of the right hand of him that sat on the
8 throne. And when he had taken the book, the four
living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down
before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden
bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
9 And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to

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very word "sent forth" reminding us of the *apostolic* work and church, and its tense betokening repetition, and endurance to the end' (Alford). Cf. 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.

7. And he came, and he taketh: takes and still keeps. The revelation of the future is an abiding possession in the hand of the Lamb.

v. 8–14. *The adoration of the Lamb.*

8. The same worship as in chap. iv is offered to 'him that sits upon the throne' is now by the same creatures offered to the Lamb.

having each one a harp (cf. xiv. 2, xv. 2; Ps. cxlvii. 7). We should possibly see these in the hands of the 'elders' only.

golden bowls full of incense. Cf. Ps. cxli. 2, 'Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee'; also Rev. viii. 3, and note there. 'The offering of incense is quite unknown in the primitive time. It is mentioned for the first time in Jer. vi. 20, and then as something rare, and therefore costly, but also as something unnecessary. The silence of the older literature cannot be an accident; we must therefore assume that it had been introduced not long before Jeremiah . . . In any case, its appearance is connected with the expansion of commerce under the later kingdom, and the introduction of greater luxury' (Benzinger).

which are the prayers of the saints. This is the natural explanation of the symbolism of incense, and is stated here as part of the common belief on the subject. It is only said that 'each' had or held a harp and bowls full of incense; that they either played on the harps, or 'offered' the contents of the bowls, is nothing more than an inference, and even were the inference correct, it is a further inference, for which there is no ground in the text, to suppose that 'the prayers of the saints' are intercessions for the church, or intercessions at all. The 'saints' are those dedicated to God, whether wholly sanctified or being sanctified; whether triumphant in heaven or militant on earth. It is the N. T. designation of the people of God, as 'holy' is their designation in the O. T.

9. they sing a new song. As in verse 7 the tense seems to

take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,
and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and 10
priests; and they reign upon the earth. And I saw, 11

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indicate the writer's consciousness that the scene he is describing is one that continues eternally. The 'new song' (cf. xiv. 3; Pss. xxxiii. 3, xcvi. 1; Isa. xlii. 10) is new because there is a new theme, even for the choirs of heaven, in the accomplishment of redemption.

and didst purchase unto God: in place of A. V. 'hast redeemed us to God.' The omission of 'us' here and below changes the character of the song, and removes the necessity of regarding any of the groups who share in it as belonging to redeemed humanity. These offer praise as spectators of the drama of Divine mercy; later on, in verse 13, they are joined by 'every created thing.' The object to 'didst purchase' has to be supplied out of the meaning of the next clause. For the idea of salvation as involving purchase cf. 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; Rev. xiv. 3, 4; Matt. xx. 28. The sphere or power from which the purchase sets free is not suggested here; on the other hand, both the sphere into which the transfer is made and the condition by which the purchase is accomplished are indicated. Men are purchased to God, and become His 'purchased possession' (1 Pet. ii. 9).

with thy blood. The blood which signifies the life of Christ wholly offered up to God, 'even unto the death of the cross,' is not so much the instrument (A. V. 'by') as the vehicle or 'conditioning element' of the purchase. See Acts xx. 28, where the preposition, however, is different.

of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. The phrase, which occurs again in vii. 9, is not to be pressed in its details; it simply expresses the universality of the work of Christ.

and madest them to be **unto our God a kingdom and priests:** cf. i. 6. The reading 'kingdom' in place of 'kings' brings the thought into closer harmony with 1 Pet. ii. 9, and the addition in this place of 'they reign upon earth' completes the cycle of ideas. 'Here we have three particulars: (1) Those who are bought to be God's own, are made into a kingdom, viz. God's; (2) they are made into priests; (3) they are invested with kingly power.' The reading accepted by our Revisers ('and they reign') is said by Bousset (who prefers 'and they shall reign') to be poorly attested; but it is adopted by Westcott and Hort, and by the Stuttgart editors.

and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand,
12 and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour,
13 and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,

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11. The new song is now taken up and continued by the innumerable angelic hosts which surround and enclose the scene that has been described. As in Dan. vii. 10 and Rev. ix. 16, the numbers serve only to suggest 'a multitude which no man could number.' The literal meaning is 'myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.' The two phrases are combined also in Dan. vii. 10; cf. *Enoch*, quoted on i. 14.

12. Compare and contrast iv. 11. **that hath been slain** answers to 'for thou didst create,' in giving the reason of the worthiness. It is noticeable that it is sevenfold honour that is paid to the Lamb, as in vii. 12; it has been pointed out that elsewhere (iv. 11, xix. 1) such praises fall into groups of three and four. The use of numbers in the literature of apocalypse is not so much artificial as instinctively appropriate.

blessing is used 'in the sense so frequent when the word and its cognate verb are used of an act passing from man to God: viz. that of ascribed praise; the will on the part of the creature, though unaccompanied by the power, to return blessing for blessing conferred' (Alford).

13. Once more the circle of the worshipping host is enlarged, this time by the inclusion, along with the hosts of heavenly beings, of the representatives of humanity and of all creation, of which this earth is the centre.

which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth. The same phrase as in verse 3; but with the addition of **and on the sea, and all things that are in them.** There is no need to press for a definite interpretation of each clause; the whole serves to describe the totality of animated creation. See Ps. viii. 6–9, and especially verse 8, 'The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas': cf. also Rev. viii. 9.

Now, at the climax of this section (chaps. iv, v) the worship that has been offered to Him that sits upon the throne (iv. 10), and that offered to the Lamb (v. 8), flow together into one stream. The collocation of these two figures, as the joint object of the and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four 14 living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.

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highest worship on the part of a writer who must have held the intense Jewish faith in monotheism, is not a little remarkable. The more we learn to emphasize the Jewish elements in his consciousness and in his material, the more we shall be impressed with his inmost breach with Judaism, his audacity, from the Jewish point of view, in equating Christ with God. Such things must be borne in mind when weighing the impression made by Jesus on contemporaries.

14. And the four living creatures said, Amen. The antiphony is thus complete. All forms of sentient being, heavenly and earthly, angelic and human, find their unity and solidarity in this worship of God, Creator and Redeemer. 'Amen' is used 'for the purpose of adopting as one's own what has just been said'; cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

Notice the omission in R.V. of the closing phrase of A.V., the MS. evidence for which is very slight: the object of their worship is not expressed, but it is plainly God and the Lamb.

This marks the close of the first portion of the book. If we call it the Introduction, it is only because it leads up to that which forms the bulk of the book, for which it probably was written; it has displayed the background of eternal facts against which all human history is transacted; it has revealed in a highly dramatic form the twin principles of the creative power and the redemptive purpose of God, which are the moving forces in that history. It has special relation, therefore, to that section of history which is now about to be dealt with and foreshadowed, and a special message to the generation of God's people which was entangled in the circumstances of the time. Chap. iv is a summons to all perplexed and suffering ones to believe in God; chap. v, a summons to believe in Christ (cf. John xiv. 1). On the other hand, this 'Introduction' has a far wider application than this special one. The Letters to the Seven Churches have given a picture of the 'church militant here on earth,' as it is at all times, in its difficulties and dangers, its temptations and failures, its triumphs and its assured reward. And in the subsequent chapters we have had an interpretation of the facts of history—that God made the world, and that He is redeeming man, in terms of eternity; an interpretation

6 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven
seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying
2 as with a voice of thunder, Come. And I saw, and
behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a

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whose validity is approved by its relation to the facts, while its value is limited to no single period of the church's experience.

vi. 1—viii. 1. THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS.

'With the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse the main action of the book may be said properly to begin. Three sections of the seven into which it is divided have already passed under our notice. The fourth section, extending from vi. 1 to xviii. 24, is intended to bring before us the struggle of the church, the judgement of God upon her enemies, and her final victory. No detail of historical events in which these things are fulfilled need be looked for. We are to be directed rather to the sources whence the trials spring and to the principles by which the victory is gained' (Milligan).

vi. 1–17. *The first six seals.*

1. And I saw. This is the standing phrase by which the writer marks a new stage in the process of the revelation, less pronounced than such as he distinguishes by, 'And after these things.' There is, therefore, no great interval of any kind between the close of the last chapter and the opening of this.

Come. The words 'and see' are omitted here, and in the subsequent verses, as of inferior MS. authority. They represent probably an early gloss. Their removal leaves open the question, To whom is the summons addressed? Most commentators, and even some who adopt the reading of the R. V., take it to be addressed to the Seer. But whither is he to go, and is he invited to go to a new place at the opening of each seal? Moreover, the word and mode of summons are different here from what we find when such an invitation is given to him; cf. viii. 1, xvii. 1, xxi. 9. Others suppose it to be addressed to the Lord Jesus. But, then, it must surely have been followed by his name, as in xxii. 20; this difficulty is not removed by the reference to xxii. 17, seeing that even there it is far from certain that the summons is addressed to Jesus. Such a summons would not be in place at this point in the book, nor yet upon the lips of the speaker, who is one of the four cherubim. It is far more natural to take it as addressed, both here and in the following cases, to the rider who appears in answer to it.

2. a white horse. The vision of the four riders on horses of different colours is based upon the vision of Zechariah (vi. 1-8;

bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

cf. i. 8). There the prophet sees four chariots, the horses in which are respectively red, black, white, and 'grisled bay.' In answer to his inquiry he is told that these 'are the four winds of heaven, which go forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth.' In the vision of chap. i, the prophet sees horses red, sorrel, and white, and is told concerning their riders that 'These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.' As to the interpretation of these figures in the Apocalypse, there is little difference of opinion regarding the three last. They represent slaughter, famine, and pestilence. But in regard to the first rider and his horse there have been many different opinions. The horse is white, which is the colour of conquest or triumph. The Roman general who was honoured with a 'Triumph' rode upon a white horse; and the crown or wreath is an obvious emblem of victory. There remains the symbolism of the bow to be explained, and possibly to give the clue to the meaning of the figure.

The best supported interpretations of the figure have been as follows: (1) It represents the Lord Christ himself (or some representative of him) coming forth in answer to the summons to 'come,' returning as a victor, 'conquering and to conquer.' The most cogent ground for this is the apparent parallelism with xix. 11, where he whose 'name is called the Word of God' appears on a white horse, with many crowns upon his head. But in that passage he appears at the close of a long series of judgements, leading the hosts of heaven to consummate all things; and there is no real parallelism with this figure which comes forth as the first of four figures, the others of which are plainly precursors of the final issue. Further, it goes even beyond apocalyptic freedom of conception that Christ should be presented at one and the same moment as the Lamb who opens the seals, and the rider who appears in consequence of that opening, if not out of the book itself. And, thirdly, it seems impossible either to separate this first rider from those who follow, or, on the other hand, to place any advent of the Lord on the same level with plagues like war, famine, and pestilence; all four must in some sort represent judgements of God. This is also a serious objection to a second interpretation which is a refinement upon the first, viz. (2) that this rider represents not Christ himself, 'but only some symbol of his victorious power, the embodiment of his advancing kingdom as regards that side of its progress where it breaks down earthly power, and makes the kingdoms of the world to be the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ' (Alford, and so, practically,

3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the
4 second living creature saying, Come. And another
horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat
thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and
that they should slay one another: and there was given
unto him a great sword.

Hilgenfeld). There seems to be no place here for a symbol of the victory of Christianity or the church. The other figures all suggest judgement-evil coming upon human society, and, accordingly, it will be best to see the same here. (3) The first rider represents conquest. The embodiment of evil force was, for this writer, the Roman Empire in all its extent and in all the manifestations of its power. Against this he predicts judgement in the coming of a conquering nation whose advent would be at least to the Roman dominion a judgement. That he had before his mind a particular nation as the instrument of judgement is at least probable; the emphatic mention of the 'bow' as the weapon of this rider would thus be explained; and without connecting the prediction with any particular battle or invasion, it is enough to know that all through the second half of the first century, and far beyond it, the possibility of a Parthian conquest of the West was in the minds of men. 'The apocalyptist predicts, in fact, a future victorious extension of the Parthian empire, and saw in that the first premonition of the end' (Bousset).

3, 4. the second seal. The rider on the red horse undoubtedly represents war in its aspect of slaughter; and here we find the writer taking up the predictions of our Lord himself as to the things that must needs come to pass before the end (Matt. xxiv. 3-8; Mark xiii. 7, 8). These things—wars and rumours of wars, famines and earthquakes—are 'the beginning of travail.' They are the birth-pangs out of which the new creation is to issue.

4. to take peace: *lit.* 'the peace.' This is not the peace established by the previous rider, but rather the known and cherished gift of peace which ideally belongs to men.

It is not possible, and it is quite unnecessary, for the understanding of the book, to identify this rider with any particular war, or those which follow with particular, historical cases of famine and pestilence. There is not a decennium in the first century in which one or other of these was not to be found in one or other of the provinces of the empire. The writer may, of course, have had before his mind definite historical occurrences, in which his anticipations seemed to find fulfilment; but if he had, it is no longer possible to identify them, and to

And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third 5
living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold,
a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance
in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the 6
midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of
wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a
penny; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

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insist on some identification is to overlook the main point of his prediction, which is that these things (? in this order) are those which must come before the end.

5, 6. the third seal. The third rider, who is mounted on a black horse, and holds scales in his hand, is evidently the representative of dearth or famine. The 'balance' is literally the beam from which the two scales are suspended. It is already a sign of scarcity that certain kinds of food are sold by weight; as in Lev. xxvi. 26, 'they shall deliver your bread again by weight; and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied'; cf. also Ezek. iv. 16. And that this is the meaning of this figure is further clear from the proclamation of the voice which seems to come, not from any one of the cherubim, but from somewhere in the centre of the four.

6. A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny. A 'penny' is the ridiculous translation retained, unfortunately, by our Revisers for a word representing about ten times the value of our penny. The denarius or dinar, which is thus translated, was worth about a franc (9½*d.* of our money), and was equivalent in Roman times to a labourer's wage for a day (see Matt. xx. 2 ff.; Luke x. 35, the good Samaritan; John xii. 3, the value of the ointment). On the other hand, a 'measure' of corn was roughly the quantity required daily for each person's consumption; 'barley' being an inferior grain, a larger quantity would be required. The burden of the proclamation, therefore, is that a time of dearth is at hand in which the utmost that a man could earn would suffice to keep himself alone, a time of terrible scarcity and yet not of actual famine. According to a passage in Cicero the normal value of twelve 'measures' of wheat was a denarius, and of twelve 'measures' of barley half a denarius.

the oil and the wine hurt thou not. The severity of the dearth is further mitigated by this provision: the vines and the olive-trees were to be spared; terrible as this judgement is, it is not final. The mercy of God still tempers His judgement. 'By this third we learn that famine, the pressure of want on

7 And when he opened the fourth seal, **I** heard the
8 voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. And
I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon
him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with
him. And there was given unto them authority over
the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and
with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of
the earth.

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men, not sweeping them away by utter failure of the means of subsistence, but keeping them far below the ordinary standard of comfort, and especially those who depend on their daily labour, will be one of the four judgements by which the Lord's way will be opened' (Alford).

7, 8. the fourth seal. The colour of the horse on which the fourth rider approaches is 'pale,' literally, 'greenish,' or 'livid,' the colour of a dead body. It corresponds, therefore, with the rider, who is 'death,' the personified source of the life-destroying forces enumerated below. And he is followed by 'Hades,' likewise a personification, viz. of the underworld, in which according to Hebrew conception all the dead were retained until the judgement. The two are similarly combined and personified in Isa. xxviii. 15, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell (Sheol) are we at agreement.' Cf. also Rev. i. 18, xx. 13, 14.

'Hades follows death. Death reaps, Hades garners: death reaps to sow, Hades garners to reproduce' (C. Rossetti).

8. the fourth part of the earth. There is no specific meaning to be attached to the fraction; it is suggested of course by the number of the riders, but it does not follow that to each of these was assigned a different quarter of the earth.

with sword, and with famine, and with death (marg. 'pestilence'), **and by the wild beasts of the earth.** Cf. Ezek. xiv. 21, where the 'four sore judgements' of God are 'the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beasts, and the pestilence.' The same series of plagues is denounced with more detail in Lev. xxvi. 22 ff. The combination of the three—sword, pestilence, and famine—is very frequent in the O. T.; cf. Jer. xxi. 7, li. 19; Ezek. v. 12. It is only a further effect of depopulation by war and pestilence that the wild beasts begin to possess the land.

'And so there grew great tracts of wilderness
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less.'

TENNYSON.

And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath 9
the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the
word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

9–11. the fifth seal. As in the letters to the seven churches, we found a group of four marked off from a group of three which followed, so with the seals; the opening of the first four leads to the appearance of the riders: the results of the next three are of a different character.

9. underneath the altar. There is no need to speculate as to which altar is meant, that of incense or of burnt offering: the imagery is not drawn from the earthly temple direct, but from previous visions such as that of Isaiah (vi. 6), where the prophet is aware of an altar in heaven. It is assumed as forming part of the scene in heaven which has been previously described. It is true that according to Exod. xxix. 12, the blood—and that signifies the life—of the victims was poured out at the foot of the altar of sacrifice; and the word 'slain' distinctly suggests, as in v. 6, 'slain in sacrifice'; but according to a tradition of later Judaism which is widely attested, it was not only the souls of 'martyrs,' but of all the righteous, which were kept, or 'buried,' under the altar which was before the throne of God. Thus in *Pirke Aboth* we have, 'Rabbi Akiba said: "whosoever is buried in the land of Israel, it is as if he were buried beneath the altar; but whosoever is buried beneath the altar, it is as if he were buried beneath the throne of glory."' Elsewhere in Rabbinic literature it is said, 'the souls of the just are below the throne of glory,' and 'God said unto the soul of Moses, "I will gather thee under the throne of my glory."'

the souls of them that had been slain. This and xx. 4 are the only passages in the N. T. where the word 'soul' is used to describe the disembodied dead (Acts ii. 27 being only an apparent exception). The ordinary word is 'spirits,' as in Heb. ii. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 19. 'Souls' signifies the immortal part of man viewed as life, and is probably used here because it was by the pouring out of their life to God that they came to be where they were.

for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. The phrase differs only by the omission of the closing words from that which has been used twice before. In i. 2 the writer describes himself as 'John, who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ'; and in i. 9 he says that he was 'in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.' In spite of the absence of the defining words at the end, the sense here must be the same as in the other passages; both clauses are objective; the

10 and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

'word' is the word given by God, the 'witness' is the witness borne by Jesus. That is to say, it is neither the witness borne by the martyrs to Christ, nor the witness borne to them by God, but the witness of Christ to God, which they 'had,' i. e. had received and preserved. Cf. John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his witness (R.V.) hath set his seal to this, that God is true': cf. also xx. 4. The phrase would seem to have been in some circles practically a technical term for that deposit of truth rather than deny which Christians were prepared to die.

10. How long: *lit.* 'until when?'; cf. Matt. xvii. 17; John x. 24; and especially Ps. xiii. 1, 2, lxii. 3, lxxix. 5, 'How long, O Lord, wilt thou be angry for ever?'

O Master, the holy and true. 'Master' for A.V. 'Lord' renders a word which, as applied to God, occurs only in two other passages in the N.T.—Luke ii. 29, in the *Nunc Dimittis*, and Acts iv. 24; it is applied to Christ in 2 Pet. ii. 1, 'Denying even the Master that bought them.' On 'true' see iii. 7 and note.

dost thou not judge and avenge our blood? Both the thought and the diction recall the tone of several of the Psalms. The appeal for judgement (cf. Ps. vii. 8, xxvi. 1) is primarily a plea for a decision in their case, and then for such a decision as will approve the righteous and openly confound the wicked. 'Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous' (Ps. vii. 9); 'Let the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed be known among the heathen in our sight' (Ps. lxxix. 10). For such judgement in the hands of a just power must necessarily issue in the 'avenging' of innocent blood. The two ideas lie together in the teaching of our Lord himself, especially in the Parable of the Importunate Widow (Luke xviii. 1-8), which furnishes in itself a curious parallel to this passage. See particularly Luke xviii. 7: 'And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is longsuffering over them? I say unto you that he will avenge them speedily.' It is not necessary to dismiss this cry of the souls of the martyrs as breathing only the spirit of Judaism, or even as falling short of the temper that is specifically Christian, though it may not reach the level of ignoring personal wrongs and suffering which is set before us as an ideal by the Spirit of Christ. It must always remain a matter of the greatest difficulty for frail men to distinguish between legitimate zeal for the manifestation of God's righteousness and the desire to have their own sufferings

And there was given them to each one a white robe; 11

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in the cause of righteousness 'avenged,' to pursue the one and to suppress the other with equal intensity. And if we are to see here the reflection of the consciousness of the church at the time, we must remember that it was that of a martyr-church, into which we are hardly capable of entering, and at a period when, as now, there was much truth into which the Spirit had still to lead Christ's disciples.

our blood. In the earliest form of the thought it is the blood itself that is represented as calling out for vengeance: 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground' (Gen. iv. 10). In the *Book of Enoch* (xxii. 5) it is the 'soul' of Abel that cries out. 'I saw the soul (or, spirit) of a dead son of man wailing; and his voice penetrated to heaven, and wailed. Then I asked the angel Michael who was with me, and said unto him, "To whom does this mourning spirit belong?" And he answered me and said, "This spirit is that which went out from Abel."' There is another interesting parallel to this whole passage in the same book (xlvii. 2): 'In those days shall the Holy Ones, who dwell above in the heavens, with one voice intercede, pray, laud, thank and praise the name of the Lord of Spirits on account of the blood of the righteous and on account of the prayer of the righteous, that it may not be in vain before the Lord of Spirits, that the judgement may be performed for them, and its tarrying be not for ever.'

11. And there was given them to each one a white robe. The martyrs are of those who have 'overcome,' and to them the promise of iii. 4, 5 is already fulfilled; they receive the white robe of purity and victory. In the *Book of Enoch* (lxii. 15) the righteous and the chosen are clothed in 'a robe of glory,' or 'of life.' 'And this shall be your robe, a robe of life beside the Lord of Spirits; your robes shall not grow old, and your glory shall not pass away before the Lord of Spirits.'

Those who, like Dr. Milligan, take the souls under the altar to be 'the saints, not of Christianity, but of Judaism,' explain this robe as the bestowal on them of Christ's righteousness. 'At death they were not made perfect. They passed rather into a holy rest, where they waited until, like Abraham, who had "rejoiced that he should see Christ's day," they saw it and were glad. Then the white robe was given them. They were raised to the level of the church which, now that Jesus had come, rejoiced in him with a joy "unspeakable and glorified."'

But it was in the martyrs 'for the testimony' of Jesus that the church was interested, not in the martyrs of the Jewish church. It is to them that this robe is given, 'the vestment of acknowledged righteousness in which the saints walk and reign and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled.

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with Christ. Their prayer for vengeance was not yet granted. The Seer saw in vision that this was so. The white robe was not actually bestowed as some additional boon, but seemed in vision to be thus bestowed, because in that vision one side only of the martyrs' intermediate state had been presented, viz. the fact of their slaughter and collective cry for vengeance. Now, as over against that, the other more glorious side is presented, viz. that though the collective cry for vengeance is not yet answered, yet individually they are blessed in glory with Christ, and waiting for their fellows to be fully complete' (Alford). 'The martyrs receive the white robes at once as consolation and as pledge of the glory which is soon to be fulfilled.'

that they should rest yet for a little time: cf. xiv. 13, and Dan. xii. 13, 'go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' Many good commentators take the rest to mean quiet or silence from calling out for vengeance; but both this and the implicit suggestion that they are to resume their cry as soon as the number of the martyrs is complete, seems hardly worthy of the scene. Better understand, as is suggested by the parallels, that they continue to rest in blessedness, or in the peace of the grave. Care must be taken not to draw hasty conclusions as to an 'intermediate state' from a passage such as this, where the vision-form makes it peculiarly difficult to distinguish between the fact and the imagery in which it is clothed. Such language, such modes of envisaging the future, may be a necessity for us who live and think in time; but they may be nothing more; they may not answer precisely to the facts of an existence which is outside time.

until their fellow-servants also and their brethren . . . should be fulfilled. The 'fellow-servants' and the 'brethren' are the same people viewed under the double aspect of their relation to God and their relation to the church. According to the correct reading (A.V. and R.V.) it is their number, a number fixed in the foreknowledge of God, which has to be completed. This idea is characteristic of the thought of later Judaism, as e.g. in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (x. 30. 2): 'And it shall come to pass at that time the treasure-chambers shall be opened, in which the (appointed) number of souls of the righteous have been kept, and they shall go forth.' Cf. also 4 Esra iv. 36 f. (Bousset). In modern language the underlying idea is that of the solidarity of

And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there 12
was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as

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the church, of the church on earth with the church in heaven, so real that their experience of blessedness lacks something until our warfare too is accomplished. Cf. especially Heb. xi. 39: 'These all . . . received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.'

which should be killed . . . as they were. We have here an indication of the point of view from which the Apocalypse was written, looking back on persecution which had already claimed its victims of the sword, and looking forward to a persecution or persecutions which would surely add to their number. The book was written to unveil that future, but by unveiling at the same time a farther future, and the background of eternity, to strengthen the faith of the church to abide with patient endurance what the immediate future might bring.

12. the sixth seal. The opening of the sixth seal is to form the climax in the unveiling of future judgements according to the first cycle, that of the seals. The relation between this and the subsequent cycles, the trumpets and the bowls, has been discussed in the Introduction. According to the view there taken, each of the three cycles cover the whole period from the writer's own to 'the end'; and the sixth seal, like the sixth trumpet and the seventh bowl, is concerned with the things which immediately precede the end. This seems to be an inevitable conclusion from a comparison of this passage with the 'Little Apocalypse' of Matthew (xxiv, esp. 29–31; cf. Mark xiii): in Matt. xxiv. 6–13, the order is 'wars and rumours of wars,' famines, earthquakes, persecution, false prophets, 'and then shall the end come.' In the following section (15–28) our Lord elaborates the picture of the period of false prophets and persecution; and continues (verses 29, 30): 'Immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.' What is depicted here, therefore, as the result of the opening of the sixth seal, is the earthquake which more distantly, and the shaking of the powers of heaven which more immediately, precedes the end. What here is seen foreshortened is afterwards displayed in more complete perspective.

a great earthquake. The same phenomenon occurs as a sign of the approaching end in viii. 5, xi. 13, xvi. 18. It was part of the common anticipation of the things that should accompany the

sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood;
13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig
tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a
14 great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll
when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island
15 were moved out of their places. And the kings of the
earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the

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manifestation of Divine power: cf. Heb. xii. 26, and the passage in Haggai (ii. 6, 7) there referred to. Cf. also the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (70. 8), where the same features are combined in a picture of the end: 'And every one who escapes out of the war shall die through an earthquake, and every one who escapes out of the earthquake will be burned in the fire; and he who escapes out of the fire will be destroyed through hunger; and all who escape from all these perils . . . they shall be entrusted to the hands of my servant, the Messiah.'

The details of the picture that follows are drawn from many passages in the O. T. In Isa. l. 3, 'I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering'; in Amos viii. 9, 'I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day'; in Isa. xiii. 10; Joel ii. 31; Ezek. xxxii. 7, as well as in the passages cited above from the Synoptists, we have this imagery used to describe a day of Divine judgement. Cf. also in the *Assumption of Moses*, x. 5: 'The horns of the moon shall be broken, and the whole of it shall be turned into blood.'

13, 14. From Isa. xxxiv. 4: 'And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig tree.' The 'unripe' figs are those which, never having ripened, are blown down by the first storm of spring. In 2 Pet. iii. 10 we read, 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,' and in the *Sibylline Oracles*, iii. 81, 'when God rolls up the heaven like as when the roll of a book is rolled up.'

14. every mountain and island were moved out of their places. This is repeated as part of the vision of the seventh bowl (xvi. 20); cf. Jer. iv. 24, and Nahum i. 5, 'The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein.' Cf. also Matt. xxiv. 35.

15. the princes. The word so translated, which occurs again in xviii. 23 (cf. Mark vi. 21), is said by Mommsen to be the name

rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman,
hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the
mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the 16
rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that
sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:
for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able 17
to stand?

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of a Parthian dignity: it is combined here, as in Mark, with a word 'chiliarchs,' which is characteristically Greek; the two together cover 'civil and military authorities.' The enumeration selects first those who by position might think themselves most secure, then those who by possession of strength or riches might seem lifted above catastrophe, but concludes by an all-embracing phrase, 'every bondman and freeman.'

hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. From Isa. ii. 10 (cf. 19, 20): 'Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty.' 'Men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth.'

16. Fall on us. So Luke xxiii. 30: 'Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us,' where our Lord himself appears to be quoting from Hos. x. 8.

and hide us from the face: cf. Ps. xxxiv. 16, 'The face of the Lord is against them that do evil,' and Nahum i. 6; Mal. iii. 2.

and from the wrath of the Lamb. Once more an attribute which is specially characteristic of the Most High, and that particularly in this connexion, viz. the day of the Lord, is transferred to the figure of Christ (cf. Jer. xxi. 5; Zech. vii. 12; Rom. i. 18); and the impression made by the phrase is all the greater because of the incongruity between 'wrath' and the natural disposition of a 'Lamb.' God and Christ are identified, as in their love towards mankind, so in their anger against those who 'go on still in their iniquity.'

17. for the great day of their wrath is come. It is difficult to decide whether we should read 'their' or 'his'; but, seeing that it is easier to understand the correction of 'his' to 'their' than the converse, it is probably best to keep the reading of A. V. 'the great day (*dies iræ, dies illa*) of his wrath.'

The 'day of the Lord' had been, even in the time of Amos (ii. 4), an idea well known to the people for a very long time. It is here transferred from the end of the Jewish to the end of the Christian dispensation, and the terrible wonders which

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners

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had been associated with it by the prophets are collected together here so as to make a picture of peculiar impressiveness. But the details of the picture are not to be too closely examined as though a special significance were concealed in each: it is the picture as a whole which claims attention, a picture of great natural catastrophes preceding the end, and creating the most hopeless terror among the inhabitants of the earth.

'Highly coloured as the language used under the sixth seal may appear to us, to the Jew animated by the spirit of the O. T. it was simply that in which he had been accustomed to express his expectation of any new dispensation of the Almighty, of any striking crisis in the history of the world. Whenever he thought of the Judge of all the earth as manifesting himself in a greater than ordinary degree, and as manifesting himself in that truth and righteousness which was the glorious distinction of his character, he took advantage of such figures as we have now before us. To the fall of Jerusalem, therefore, to every great crisis in human history, and to the close of all, they may be fittingly applied' (Milligan).

vii. First Parenthesis: Two Visions of the Redeemed.

At this point in the book we are met for the first time by a feature in its construction which is both important and perplexing. Instead of passing directly from the sixth seal to the seventh, as he has done from one to other of the preceding ones, the writer interposes here a section which appears to be independent of the seal-cycle, and to break the continuity of the revelation. In like manner, between the sixth trumpet and the seventh, we shall find a considerable section introduced (x. 1-xi. 14), which seems to break the continuity. There have been many different explanations of this phenomenon (see Introduction, §§ 9, 11). The one adopted here is that all these various sections were put where we find them by one and the same writer, whom we call the Author of the Apocalypse; that some of them were already either in form or in substance part of the apocalyptic tradition with which he worked, material, some of it of Jewish origin, which he incorporated in his Christian view of the future.

These visions find their place here inasmuch as they are calculated to sustain the courage and confidence of the redeemed at the point which has now been reached. The contents of the seventh seal are still unknown; the six that have been opened have predicted an ever-widening sweep of judgement; at this point assurance is to be given in the most solemn way concerning God's redeemed, that they are to be secure from the plagues and judgements which are to befall the world. 'It is the manner,' says Dr. Milligan, 'of the apocalyptic writer, before any final or particularly critical manifestation of the wrath of God, to present us with visions of consolation, so that we may enter into the thickest darkness, even into the valley of the shadow of death, without alarm.'

The seventh chapter is marked off from the foregoing, and also itself divided into two well-marked sections by the phrase, 'after these things I beheld,' occurring both in verse 1 and in verse 9, by which the writer is accustomed to mark the larger breaks in his work. The suggestion thus arises that in this chapter we have two distinct visions, and this is confirmed by an examination of its contents. With the same general purpose in view, viz. to give solemn assurance of the security of the redeemed, the two parts present marked distinctions. In the first, great emphasis is laid upon the fixed, though it may be symbolical, number of the sealed; in the second, even greater emphasis is laid on the fact that the redeemed cannot be numbered. In the first they are 'of all the tribes of the children of Israel,' and this limitation is further insisted on by their being distributed among the several tribes which make up that whole; in the second every effort is made to assert the removal of any such national limitation. And once more the sealed in the first are sealed against, or with a view to, coming tribulation, while in the second the vision is of those who have already 'come out of great tribulation.' Moreover, the relation to God of those qualified to be sealed is expressed in terms of the old Covenant as that of servants or 'bondsmen,' whereas the relation of the redeemed in the second vision to God is traced to the cleansing efficacy of the blood of the Lamb. In a word, the first section of this chapter is penetrated by the spirit of the O. T., the second by the thought of the N. T. The most probable explanation seems to be that the writer is here quoting from some Jewish apocalypse in which the Jewish anticipation of the final deliverance is described, while in the second vision he carries on the anticipation to its Christian fulfilment on a vaster scale, and through the conditions revealed in Christ.

Confirmation of this suggested origin for verses 1-8 is found in the remarkable fact that in the list of tribes contained in verses 5-8 there is no mention of the tribe of Dan. Various explanations have been given of this omission, as e. g. that the tribe had died out (but so had others besides Dan), that it is because Dan early fell away into idolatry (but again this would not distinguish it from all the other tribes); but the only plausible explanation remains that suggested by Irenæus, viz. that 'this tribe is not reckoned with those that are saved in the Apocalypse,' because

of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or
2 upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and

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of the tradition that Antichrist was to be born of Dan, as the Messiah of the tribe of Judah. The tradition may have had its source in Gen. xlix. 17 (cf. Jer. viii. 16, and the omission of the same tribe from 1 Chron. iv–vii). Bousset (*Der Antichrist*, p. 114) thinks that traces of the same tradition are to be found in the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* ('Dan'). But if this explanation be correct, and it was the one commonly accepted by patristic commentators, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that vii. 1–8 is a fragment of Jewish apocalypse incorporated by the Christian writer.

vii. 1–8. *The sealing of the Twelve Tribes.*

1. I saw four angels. 'Not, as many interpreters, bad angels, nor does it necessarily follow that we are to adopt the analogy of xvi. 5 and to regard them as "angels of the winds"; but simply angels to whom this office is committed. All allegorizing and all individualizing interpretations are out of the question' (Alford).

the four corners of the earth: i. e. the four cardinal points. The earth is doubtless conceived of as a flat surface. The Hebrews thought of the world as a disk (cf. Isa. xl. 22): see Whitehouse's art. 'Cosmogony' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, with the diagram. The 'corners' must not be pressed to suggest that the shape was a rectangle.

holding the four winds. The meaning is that they were holding back the winds that they should not break forth in destructive force until an appointed time. It is to be noted, however, that we hear no more of these angels or of the loosening of the winds.

For the 'four' winds cf. Zech. vi. 5 and Jer. xlix. 36: 'And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven'; Dan. vii. 2, xi. 4.

2. I saw another angel. Again this is simply the angel to whom this duty was committed, and neither our Lord nor the Holy Spirit.

ascend from the sunrising. This rendering (R. V.) gives the clue to the thought that like the sun this angel comes with light and hope. Cf. Ezek. xliii. 2, 'And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.'

the living God: cf. Ps. xlii. 3, 9; Jer. x. 10, xxiii. 36; Hos. i. 10.

he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom
it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt 3
not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall
have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

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to hurt: as in vi. 6, ix. 4.

till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. With the whole passage should be compared Matt. xxiv. 31: 'And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' There appear to be three kinds of significance attached to 'sealing' in the Scriptures. Its purpose may be (1) to authenticate, as in John vi. 27 (cf. John iii. 33; 1 Kings xi. 8); (2) to assert ownership, to claim possession, as in the branding of slaves, captives, or cattle; this is the reference in Isa. iii. 24, 'branding' for 'burning,' and metaphorically, in 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13, iv. 30 (cf. Rom. xv. 28); (3) to assure safety, on the ground of this ownership, in which case the seal becomes a protective mark; this idea is illustrated by the blood-marks on the lintel protecting the Hebrew house from the angel of death (Exod. xii. 23), and more closely, by the passage in Ezek. ix. 4-6: 'But come not near any man upon whom is the mark.' The significance of the sealing in Revelation seems to combine both the latter ideas (cf. ix. 4, xiii. 6, xiv. 1, 9, 11, xix. 20, xx. 4, xxii. 4); when it is the redeemed of God who are sealed, it is to mark them as in His possession, and under His protection.

Already in the O. T. we find a few indications of such protective marks. The mark put upon Cain may have had this significance, and in Isa. xliv. 51; Lev. xix. 27 f., xxi. 5 f.; Deut. xiv. 1 f., there is likewise implied an acquaintance with sacred signs by which the bearer indicates that he belongs to a certain deity; were the Israelites to permit of the sign of another God among them, they would thereby rupture their special relation to God as His people. Further illustrations are found in *Ps. Sol.* xv. 6: 'for the sign of God is upon the righteous unto salvation'; according to 3 Macc. ii. 29, the Alexandrian Jews were compelled by Ptolemy IV, Philopator, to have branded upon them an ivy leaf, the sign of Dionysus; Philo reproaches the Jewish apostates for allowing themselves to be branded with the signs of idols made with hands; finally, the Tephillin, prayer-fillets, were regarded as protective marks, and were designated 'phylacteries,' the technical term for amulets. See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 350 f., from which this note is abridged. No indication is given as to the mark or inscription on the seal; probably it was the

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand:
6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand:
7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand:

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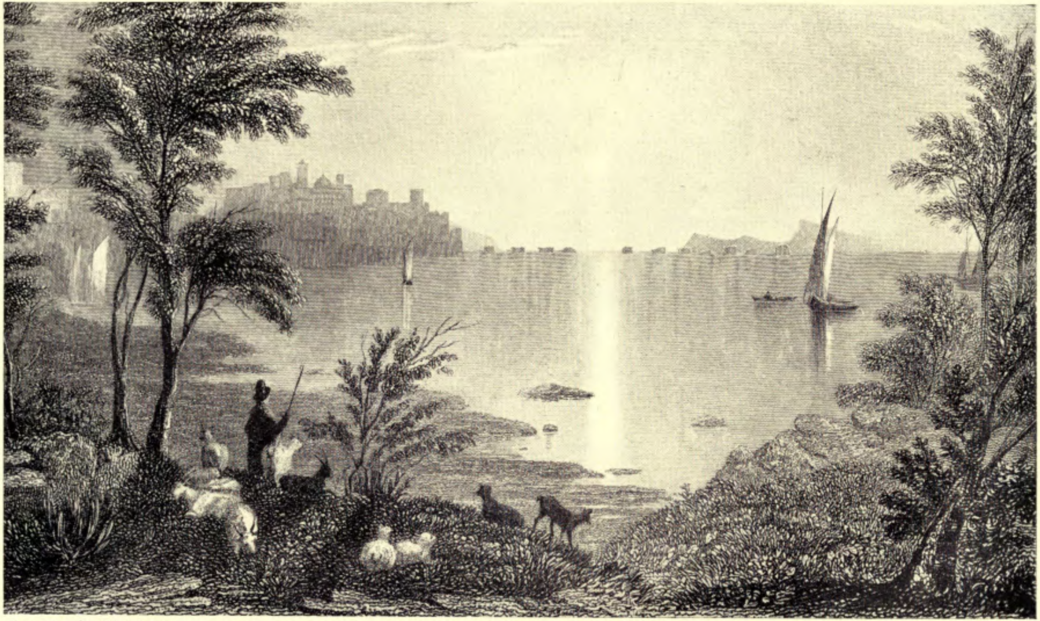
name of God; cf. iii. 12 and ii. 17. 'Such a seal, manifest to the eyes of all, was a witness to all that they who bore it were acknowledged by the Redeemer before all, even before his Father and the holy angels.'

4. The actual sealing is not described; neither does the Seer appear to behold the assembly of those who are thus sealed; contrast verse 9.

a hundred and forty and four thousand. The number, being based upon the square of twelve, itself one of the typical numbers of completeness, is evidently a symbolical one; 'no one that I am aware of has taken it literally, and supposed that just this particular number and no more is imported. The import for us is that the Lord knoweth and sealeth his own; that the fullness of their number shall be accomplished, and not one shall fail' (Alford).

out of every tribe of the children of Israel. Those who do not see in the first half of this chapter a quotation from a Jewish source have the greatest difficulty in explaining these words. Are they to be taken literally, of Israel 'according to the flesh,' or spiritually, of Israel 'according to faith,' the Christian church? If literally, why is the number in the case of Israel so definitely limited, and in the other so emphatically unlimited? What is the difference between the sealing of the one class and the redemption of the other? But if spiritually, so that both visions refer to members of Christ's church, then again, what is the relation between the two visions, and how are we to account for the distribution of the whole number among the Twelve Tribes, to which there is nothing corresponding in the church?

5-7. This enumeration of the tribes is remarkable for several reasons: (1) Dan is omitted (see above on verse 1); (2) 'Joseph'



Drawing by W. Linton

Puteoli

Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand: 8
Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand:
Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.
After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, 9

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appears instead of Ephraim; (3) Levi is included; (4) the order in which the tribes are mentioned seems to follow no ascertainable principle. Cf. the lists in Num. xiii. 5; Deut. xxxiii; 1 Chron. iv–vii; and see Buchanan Gray, *Expositor* (1902), p. 225 ff.

'We must assume that here also the "sealed" stand for the Jewish believers, who maintain their faithfulness in the struggle with Antichrist, and are saved. Even the earlier exegetes know of this combination and explain the 144,000 of believing Jewish Christians, who are to be converted at the preaching of Elias at the end of the days, and to take up the conflict with Antichrist' (Bousset).

vii. 9–17. *The vision of the great multitude of the redeemed.* As was pointed out above, there is a deep difference between this vision and the foregoing. We are conscious of a sudden expansion of the horizon, and this is due not so much to any change of subject as to a change in the treatment of the same subject, a change in the tone and atmosphere. Here the redeemed are a great multitude, the special characteristic of which is that it cannot be numbered; here they are gathered out of 'all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues.' The writer seems to rejoice in heaping up words to shew that every barrier of race has disappeared. In the former part it is at least suggested that the condition of being sealed is found in abiding in union with the chosen people. Here those who serve God day and night in the temple do so on the ground that they have washed their robes 'in the blood of the Lamb.' It would indeed be difficult to exaggerate the difference between the two parts of the chapter, and yet they are not contradictory. The one grows out of the other; and the whole might be described as a supreme illustration of the difference that Christ has made. The first eight verses of this chapter may have formed part of some apocalyptic work with which John had been familiar; their contents would certainly be part of the religious furnishing of his mind, as a Jew, of the time of Christ. To him as a Christian, then, even to him writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, they seemed to be still valid, important, it may be essential, to a complete presenta-

which no man could number, out of every nation, and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes,
10 and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on
11 the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and *about* the

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tion of the future; so he has incorporated them in his Apocalypse. But then the larger view bursts upon him, the kingdom of heaven open not only to those who are in some sense connected with Israel, but 'to all believers.' The earlier and more limited expectation of the future becomes merely a platform from which the Seer is swept off to contemplate and describe the purpose of God larger than the Jews had known, a purpose that included all nations and kindreds and peoples.

9. which no man could number. Cf. *Book of Enoch*, xl. 1: 'And after that I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of spirits.'

out of every nation: cf. v. 9, and note.

before the throne and before the Lamb. The scene remains the same as before in all its features, only this 'great cloud' of redeemed saints now becomes visible to the Seer's quickened sight.

arrayed in white robes (cf. iii. 5, vi. 11), **and palms in their hands** (cf. John xii. 13). The carrying of palm-branches may be explained as a symbol of festal joy, as at the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, or as the symbol of victory. Taken in connexion with the white robes, it is probably the latter. Deissmann (*Bible Studies*, p. 358 f.) suggests that the imagery is drawn from the religious processions in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, in which those who took part walked 'clothed in white and crowned with a bough and holding a bough in their hands.' But there is no need to look for any special source of images which have been so universally connected with joy and triumph.

10. Salvation unto our God: cf. xix. 1; Ps. iii. 8. Originally bearing the specific sense of deliverance from the enemy, the word 'salvation' acquired a larger and a positive meaning when it was used to designate the complete Messianic victory, of which that deliverance was a part. To ascribe 'salvation' to God, therefore, is to ascribe to Him the highest and final victory.

11. As in v. 11, the angels take up the song which has been commenced by others. They make their own the praise, which

elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before
the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 12
Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our
God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders 13
answered, saying unto me, These which are arrayed in
the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?
And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he 14
said to me, These are they which come out of the great
tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them
white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they 15

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has been already rendered, with their 'Amen' (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 16), and then expand it into a song of their own.

12. Here, as in v. 13, the ascription is one of sevenfold praise.

13. one of the elders. See note on iv. 4; it is in harmony with the whole method of the book that the interpreter of the vision should be not a representative, even a glorified one, of the earthly church, but one of the heavenly powers.

This is 'a celestial model of catechetical instruction; the question being propounded for the sake of the learner, not apparently of the asker' (C. Rossetti).

14. My lord. The tone is one of deep reverence, consistent with a most exalted rank in the one addressed. Cf. Dan. x. 16, 17; Zech. iv. 5, 13.

thou knowest: i. e. I do not know, but would learn from thee; cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

These are they which come out of the great tribulation. Observe the variations from A.V. It is not merely, in the first instance at least, out of the great tribulations of life that these do come, but out of some conspicuous and well-defined experience of suffering, some period of unusually severe persecution. It is possible, but not probable, that the period referred to is already passed for the Seer; more likely that it is still in the future, 'the great tribulation' foretold by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 21), the time of martyrdom in which the number of martyred saints was to be fulfilled; cf. vi. 11.

Others, however, take the reference to be a more general one, to 'all that tribulation' which befalls the Christian church in its struggle with the world.

and they washed their robes (i. 5, and note), **and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** There is no necessity,

before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne
16 shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall

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with Hengstenberg and others, to distinguish the two clauses as describing successive stages in the process of salvation, as e.g. forgiveness and sanctification; the double phrase serves to describe one experience with great emphasis, 'they washed them, and by doing so made them white.' But what is the experience referred to? Is it the spiritual cleansing which is bestowed upon all Christians through their faith in the sacrifice of Christ (cf. 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin'; also Acts xv. 9)? Or is it the specific experience of martyrdom, leading to the clothing in the white robes of victory? The answer will depend largely on the interpretation we give to 'the great tribulation': but the latter explanation seems to be more in harmony with the spirit of this book, with its predominating interest in the case of those who are to suffer martyrdom, as also with the imagery of the white robes, which appears commonly to refer to the martyr-triumph. In this case the 'blood of the Lamb' would be the instrumental cause of their victory, and so of their making white their robes; cf. xii. 11, 'They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.'

15. before the throne of God: in His presence, 'where is fulness of joy,' taking their place along with and among the heavenly and angelic powers who worship Him from all eternity.

they serve him. So in xxii. 3, 'His servants shall do him service.' The word has special reference to the service of the sanctuary, the ministry of worship. Milton was giving, not its secondary, but its primary sense, when he wrote, 'they also serve who only stand and wait.'

his temple. The heavenly temple, 'not made with hands,' is the condition localized of those who see God and serve Him with unclouded vision and undivided love.

shall spread his tabernacle over them: for the A. V. 'shall dwell among them.' The word is the same as that used in John i. 14, 'The Word . . . dwelt (R.V. marg. 'tabernacled') among us'; cf. also xxi. 3. It is connected by sound, though not otherwise, with the Hebrew word for the overshadowing Presence of God-Schechinah; and the thought should be traced back to the promise in Lev. xxvi. 11, Ezek. xxxvii. 27, with its symbolic manifestation in the 'cloud upon the mercy-seat,' Lev. xvi. 2; Ezek. x. 3, 4.

16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb 17
which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

From Isa. xlix. 10, 'They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them'; cf. also Ps. cxxi. 6. The primary reference in the word 'heat,' as used by Isaiah, is to the scorching, suffocating wind known as the 'sirocco.'

17. in the midst of the throne. Though the preposition is different, the sense is the same as in v. 6; the Lamb is not on the throne, but at the middle point in the front of it.

shall be their shepherd. So R. V. for A. V. 'shall feed them'; cf. ii. 27. The word means literally, 'shall shepherd them,' which includes of course both the finding of pasture for them and guiding or controlling their movements. It is used in John xxi. 16, in our Lord's address to Peter, 'shepherd my sheep.' The figure of the shepherd, so familiar in the O. T. as a description of God in His relation to His people (Ps. xxiii. 1 f.: Isa. xl. 11), is transferred to Christ, as it had been claimed by Jesus himself (John x. 11-16).

unto fountains of waters of life. This rendering is more literal than that of the A. V.; still more literally we might render, 'unto life's water-springs'; the emphasis is strongly on the word 'life.' In xxii. 1 the water of life is as a river 'proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.' In comparison with the passage in Isaiah ('even by the springs of water shall he guide them') the thought has taken a more distinctly spiritual meaning: the middle term will be found in the teaching of Jesus; cf. John iv. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life'; also vii. 38.

God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. This promise, which is repeated in xxi. 4, is found in Isa. xxv. 8, 'And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.'

The value of these two consolatory visions is seen in their effect: they not only break the crushing monotony of anticipated judgement, but they reveal the absolute truth of the situation, in which God's judgement is eternally linked with mercy. The justice that compels Him to take vengeance upon sin never impinges upon the faithfulness with which He maintains His saving grace towards them that believe. Sustained by such assurance, therefore, these can go on to face the culmination of judgement, which still lies in the future, with the tranquillity of faith.

8 And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

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viii. THE SEVENTH SEAL LEADING TO THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS.

viii. 1-6. *The Seventh Seal.* The immediate effect of the breaking of the Seventh Seal is 'silence in heaven,' during which deliberate and solemn preparation is made for the next cycle of judgements, following on the blowing of the Trumpets. Impressive as this is, it is hardly what we should have expected to find as the result of the opening of the Seal which is the climax of its cycle, and has been further led up to by the foregoing visions of consolation. 'Its contents have not the significance which we seem entitled to expect. It is the last Seal of its own series, and when we turn to the last member of the Trumpet series at xi. 15, or of the Bowl series at xvi. 17, we find them marked, not by less, but by much greater, force than had belonged in either case to the six preceding members. The seventh Trumpet and the seventh Bowl sum up and concentrate the contents of their predecessors' (Milligan). When it is further observed that the main result of the opening of this last Seal is to lead to preparation for the Trumpets, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that its complete results are inclusive of the Trumpet series itself. The contents of this seventh judgement are not exhausted until xi. 15 is reached, if indeed they may not be said to extend to the end of the Bowl series at xvi. 17. On the relation of the three cycles see further in Introduction, p. 69.

1. there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. No satisfactory explanation of the length of the silence can be given, which attempts to take the half-hour literally. An hour stands for a completed portion of time; half an hour for a broken and indefinite period. It suggests the wistful or alarmed uncertainty with which the end of the silence was awaited, especially by the Seer. The silence big with fate conveys, as nothing else could, the sense of trembling suspense; the 'lightnings and voices and thunders' ceased; even the music and the praises of heaven ceased; the whole innumerable multitude of heavenly beings were intent to see what should come—would it be the end? The judgements of God, down to that which shall prove the final one, are always at once complete and incomplete: they make an end, but they also mark a beginning. And there are times in history, taken on every scale, from that of the individual man to that of the whole world, when men and nations, groups of God's people or the church at large, hold their breath, as it were, to watch for the bursting forth of new judgement.

2. the seven angels which stand before God. By these are

And I saw the seven angels which stand before God; 2
and there were given unto them seven trumpets.
And another angel came and stood over the altar,
having a golden censer; and there was given unto him 3

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meant not merely the angels who happened to be standing before the throne, but the seven who, according to later Jewish ideas, were distinguished above the rest and occupied that position as of right. This differentiation of the seven shews its earliest trace in Ezek. ix. 2, where the 'men' are angelic beings; it appears clearly in Tobit xii. 15, 'I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in before the glory of the Holy One.' The conception finds expression under different forms in this book, e.g. probably in 'the seven spirits which are before his throne' (i. 4); in the seven eyes of the Lamb (v. 6); and possibly in the seven torches of fire 'burning before the throne' (iv. 5). See note on i. 4.

seven trumpets. For the trumpet in connexion with judgement cf. 1 Cor. xv. 52; Isa. xxvii. 13.

3. another angel. There is no reason (except a supposed doctrinal difficulty) for understanding anything else than the simple meaning of the words; this may be another of the seven angels, but it is an angel and nothing more.

stood over (or 'at') **the altar, having a golden censer.** Though the word translated 'censer' commonly means 'incense' (1 Chron. ix. 29), it must plainly be understood here of a receptacle, the 'firepan' of Exod. xxxviii. 3 ('copper'), 1 Kings vii. 50 ('gold'). On the hot coals which it contained the incense was sprinkled, according to the directions in Lev. xvi. 12; cf. Num. xvi. 46. The writer appears to have two altars before his view: the first, over which the angel stands, corresponding to the altar of burnt offering which stood before the Holy Place; the other to the altar of incense within the Holy Place, which according to Num. iv. 11 was also 'golden.' In other words, the scene in which this vision is set is slightly different from that described in chap. iv; there the imagery corresponds to the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, here to the arrangements of the earthly temple. No difficulty need be felt in this; the 'patterns of things in the heavens' take the place of 'the heavenly things themselves' for the moment. But it is an indication of the apocalyptic manner, which resists the attempt to enforce upon it any continuously self-consistent scheme. It is still the heavenly temple in which the visions have their setting, although the writer describes its furniture in terms of the earthly sanctuary.

and there was given unto him: that is, by some one appointed to do so, not 'by the saints who offered the prayers.'

much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers
of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before
4 the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the
prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the
5 angel's hand. And the angel taketh the censer; and

'It is a frequent apocalyptic formula in reference to those things or instruments with which the ministrations necessary to the progress of the visions are performed.'

that he should add (marg. 'give') **it unto the prayers of all the saints.** The figure is somewhat different from that in verse 8, where the 'odours' are 'the prayers of the saints.' The function of the angels in offering, assisting, or supporting the prayers of men is a feature belonging to later Jewish tradition. A trace of such mediation may possibly be found in Zech. i. 12; in Tobit (xii. 12) Raphael says to Tobit, 'And now, when thou didst pray . . . I did bring the memorial of your prayer before the Holy One.' In the *Book of Enoch* (ix. 3 ff., &c.) the angels or archangels are found interceding for human affairs. The reality to which this scene corresponds is not, however, the necessity or even the value of angelic intercession, but the concurrence of the Divine will with the human petitions. These prayers are made 'in an acceptable time'; cf. Isa. xlix. 8; Ps. lxix. 13; 2 Cor. vi. 2. As Alford puts it: 'The incense imports here, we may perhaps say, acceptability owing to the ripeness of the season in the Divine purposes, so that the prayers, lying unanswered before, become, by the fullness of the time, acceptable as regards an immediate reply.' No one will be misled by such passages who bears in mind (1) that the angels are not glorified men, but personifications of the attributes, or purposes, or activities of God as they go forth towards mankind, and (2) that 'there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.'

The prayers are those of 'all saints,' that is to say, not of the martyrs only (cf. v. 10), but of the whole church.

4. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up. More literally, 'And there went up the smoke of the incense for the prayers of the saints,' i.e. 'for their benefit,' 'on their behalf.' The meaning is the same as in the previous verse; the aspirations of heaven, which are the will of God, coincided with the prayers of earth; these prayers, therefore, were about to be answered.

5. The angel takes the **censer,** having used it as above, and replenishes it again from the 'live coals from off the altar'; then casts it, that is, the burning embers with which it was filled, down from heaven on to (*lit.* 'into') the earth. In Ezek. x. 2 we find he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets 6 prepared themselves to sound.

And the first sounded, and there followed hail and 7 fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up,

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the command given to the 'man (= 'angel') clothed in linen' to 'fill both his hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.' The purpose is the same here, to signify that, in answer to the prayers of His suffering people, the fire of God is about to descend in vengeance on the earth.

The silence is broken by thunders and voices, to which are added lightnings (as in iv. 5), and also earthquake (as in xi. 19, xvi. 18). These are the 'symbolic precursors' of the judgements which are about to follow.

6. The angels put their trumpets to their lips, ready to sound.

viii. 7—ix. 21. THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS.

Like the Seals, the Trumpets fall into two groups of four and three. The first four affect various portions of nature, the vegetation, the sea, the rivers, and the luminaries of the sky. The last three, which are further distinguished as Woes, affect mankind. 'We may fairly say that the plagues of the four former trumpets affect the accessories of life; whereas those of the last two affect life itself, the former by the infliction of pain, the latter of death' (Alford). There is, moreover, an evident correspondence, which cannot be overlooked, between these Trumpet-Plagues (and also those which proceed from the Bowls) and the 'Plagues of Egypt.' The order is not the same, and four of course are wanting (the 'lice,' the 'flies,' the 'murrain,' and the death of the firstborn).

viii. 7. *The first Trumpet.*

7. hail and fire, mingled with blood. Cf. Exod. ix. 24, 'So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail'; Ps. xviii. 12, 13. In the *Sibylline Oracles* (v. 377) we find a like prophecy: 'For fire shall rain from the heavenly regions upon men, fire and blood.'

The phrase, **the third part of the earth,** is introduced into the R. V. on the authority of the best MSS. Like the phrase 'for the space of half an hour' in the preceding chapter, it is not to be interpreted in any literal sense, but as indicating that this judgement, terrible and destructive as it is, is still only a partial and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and
9 the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, *even* they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon

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one—more of the earth escapes than is destroyed. The same consideration will apply in similar cases which follow both in this chapter and in ix. 15, 18. This use of fractions to express relative proportion rather than absolute quantities may be illustrated from Zech. xiii. 8, 9, 'And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein'; cf. also Ezek. v. 2. No explanation can be given of the whole of the grass being destroyed, while two-thirds of the trees escape.

viii. 8-9. *The Second Trumpet.*

8. as it were a great mountain: that is, not a great mountain, but a burning mass, in size like unto a mountain. The phrasing is similar to that in Luke xxii. 44, where 'the words do not *necessarily* mean more than that the drops of sweat in some way resembled drops of blood, e.g. by their size and frequency' (Plummer). In the imagery of the mountain there may be a reminiscence of the difficult verses in Jer. li. 25, 'I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth.'

the third part. See above on v. 7.

became blood. So in xvi. 3, after the pouring of the third Bowl, the sea 'became as the blood of a dead man.' Both judgements correspond to the first of the Egyptian Plagues: 'all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood'; cf. Exod. vii. 17-21. And, as there, 'the fish that were in the river died,' so here, 'there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea.'

viii. 10-11. *The Third Trumpet.*

10. a great star. There is no parallel here with the 'day star, son of the morning,' which Isaiah addresses (xiv. 12) as 'fallen from heaven': the image is that of a natural star.

the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; and the name of the star is called Worm- 11
wood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of 12
the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

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11. and the name of the star is called Wormwood. The name in Greek is that from which we get, by transliteration, the word 'absinth'; wormwood is not known to be poisonous, and even in Jer. ix. 14, xxiii. 15, it is not associated with fatal results. These follow, in this case, from the fact that all the water available for 'many of mankind' is impregnated with the bitter wood. The converse effect of making bitter waters sweet is produced in Exod. xv. 25 by the casting of a tree into the water. Alford's remark on this judgement is worth transcribing. 'It is hardly possible to read of this third plague and not to think of the deadly effect of those strong spirituous drinks which are in fact water turned into poison. The very name "absinthe" is not unknown in their nomenclature: and there is no effect which could be so aptly described by the falling of fire into water, as this, which results in ardent spirit, in that which the simple islanders of the South Sea call "firewater." That this plague may go on to destroy even this fearful proportion of the ungodly in the latter days is far from impossible, considering its prevalence even now in some parts of the civilized world.'

viii. 12. *The Fourth Trumpet.* No intermediate cause is specified between the blowing of this trumpet and the falling of the judgement. The darkness, which follows also on the pouring of the fifth Bowl, corresponds with the ninth of the Egyptian Plagues (Exod. x. 21–23). It is described in a highly metaphorical manner, so that it is not easy to get a clear conception of the writer's meaning, beyond this that a considerable portion of the light of sun, moon, and stars is cut off, with the result that the light of day from the sun, and of night from the moon, are both limited to the same extent.

13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

9 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to
2 him the key of the pit of the abyss. And he opened

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viii. 13. *Transition to the Three Woes—the last three trumpets.*

13. an eagle. So R.V. rightly for A.V. 'an angel.' Once more this is to be understood literally, the strangeness of the image being part of the apocalyptic style, and not greater than that of the burning mountain or the falling star. An eagle swooping upon his prey is a symbol of judgement in Hos. viii. 1 (cf. Hab. i. 8, 'They fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour'); and in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (lxxvii. 19–22) the Seer sends forth an eagle to carry his letter.

in mid heaven: for A.V. 'through the midst of heaven'; the word, which occurs again in xiv. 6, xix. 17, stands for the zenith, or the meridian. Flying there, the eagle is 'seen and heard of all.'

The thrice-repeated 'Woe' answers to the threefold judgement which is about to follow, although only the first and the second of these are described expressly as such (ix. 12, xi. 14).

ix. 1–12. *The Fifth Trumpet; the First Woe.*

1. a star from heaven fallen unto the earth. This star plainly differs from the one referred to in viii. 10, inasmuch as it is represented as receiving the key and opening the abyss; we have here, therefore, a personification. That it is a 'fallen angel,' in the technical sense, we have no reason to assume, seeing that it is not to other angels of that class that the carrying out of the judgements is committed. This star is 'fallen,' simply because a star upon earth could not be thought of except as fallen from heaven. Bousset points out that, in the *Book of Enoch*, stars which have fallen from heaven appear in animal (lxxxvi. 1) and (lxxxviii. 1) in human form. Thus: 'Moreover, I saw with my eyes, while I slept, and I saw the heaven above, and behold a star fell down from heaven, and when it arose, it fed and browsed among those oxen.' The undoubted reference to Isa. xiv. 12 and Luke x. 18, occurs first in xii. 9.

the key of the pit of the abyss. So R.V. in correction of A.V. 'of the bottomless pit.' The three conceptions of the 'abyss,' the 'pit,' or shaft that leads to it, and the 'key' by which the entrance to the pit is locked, are all traceable in the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts 3

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later Jewish thought. The word 'abyss,' meaning literally 'bottomless,' is used many times in the LXX to render the Hebrew word which signifies 'tumultuous water-deep,' and specially the 'waters beneath,' by which the earth was at first covered (Gen. i. 2; Ps. civ. 6-9), but on which it was afterwards made to rest. This word came to be used, in a secondary sense, of the place of the dead, conceived of as beneath the earth, as in Ps. lxxi. 20, 'Thou . . . shalt quicken us again, and shalt bring us up again from the depths (Greek, 'from the abysses') of the earth.' So in Rom. x. 7 it signifies 'the abode of the dead.' 'The relation to Sheol, with its dull, shadowy monotony and even misery, coupled with the Old Testament idea of Sheol as a pit-dungeon (Isa. xxiv. 22) and with pre-New Testament apocalyptic usage (*Enoch*, x. 13, "chasm of fire"; xxi. 10, "prison of the angels"), prepared for the New Testament use of the word' (see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, articles 'Abyss' and 'Cosmogony'). In the development of the doctrine of the other world 'abyss' came to stand specially for the abode of the powers of evil (cf. xi. 7, xvii. 8).

The word translated 'pit' means literally, 'well,' and describes the shaft by which there was supposed to be communication between the upper and the under worlds. According to Rabbinic tradition the opening of this shaft was asserted to be below the foundation-stone of the temple. The idea of the closing and the locking of the entrance is found in the Prayer of Manasses (verse 3), 'O Lord . . . who hast shut up the deep (*lit.* 'the abyss'), and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name.'

2. as the smoke of a great furnace: cf. Gen. xix. 28; Exod. xix. 18. But the meaning here may be that what at first looked like smoke, so black and dense it was, proved to be a suffocating cloud of locusts. This suggestion is borne out by the description given by a modern observer (1865): 'In April last we observed twice large dark clouds resembling smoke, moving to and fro, as if swayed by the wind. One morning these clouds came down, and proved to be locusts, so great in number that the whole land was covered with them.' This and many other valuable illustrations will be found in an Excursus on the subject in Prof. Driver's *Commentary on Joel* (Cambridge Bible for Schools).

3. locusts. This part of the fifth Trumpet (there is no parallel

upon the earth; and power was given them, as the
4 scorpions of the earth have power. And it was said
unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the
earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only
such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads.
5 And it was given them that they should not kill them,
but that they should be tormented five months: and
their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when
6 it striketh a man. And in those days men shall seek

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in the Bowls series) corresponds to the eighth of the Egyptian Plagues. But the most instructive parallel is that with Joel's famous description of a plague of locusts (ii. 2-11), where there is special emphasis upon the darkness which they cause: 'The earth quaketh before them: the heavens tremble; the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.'

as the scorpions of the earth. To all their powers of mischief as locusts, these locusts of hell have added the power of scorpions to 'torment' men; see verse 5.

4. This, in fact, is to be their special function; for whereas the locusts of earth attack the vegetation only, these are commanded to refrain from 'any green thing,' and to hurt men.

such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. There is evidently a reference here to the sealing of the 144,000 in chap. vii. Like the last of the Egyptian Plagues, this one is to fall upon those who have not made good their claim to be God's people, who have not 'this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.' 'The judgements of the trumpets are judgements on the world. The church, it is true, may also suffer from them, but not in judgement. They may be part of her trial, as she mixes with the world during her earthly pilgrimage. Trial, however, is not judgement. To the children of God it is the discipline of a Father's hand. In the midst of it the church is safe, and it helps to ripen her for the fullness of the glory of her heavenly inheritance' (Milligan).

5. Even the unsealed, however, are not to suffer the extreme penalty of destruction from this judgement. And the period of its duration is limited. The period is described as **five months,** because that is the ordinary length of a visitation of locusts, and for no symbolical reason.

6. men shall seek death: as after the opening of the sixth Seal; see vi. 16. The Seer here lays aside the apocalyptic manner, and speaks as with the tongue of a prophet.

death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire
to die, and death fleeth from them. And the shapes 7
of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war;
and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold,
and their faces were as men's faces. And they had hair 8
as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth*
of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breast- 9
plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the
sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. And 10

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they shall desire to die. It has been pointed out that we have here a 'horrible counterpart' to Paul's 'having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.'

7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war. So in Joel ii. 4, 'The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses, and as warhorses (marg.) so do they run.' To horses clad in armour they would bear a special resemblance, but it is uncertain whether such armour was used by the ancients. The likeness may then be found in the disciplined array of their march.

as it were crowns like unto gold. This feature is difficult to identify with anything in the natural insect, the colours of which are thus described: 'They change in colour as they grow: at first they are black; when about three weeks old they become green, after two weeks more they are yellow striped with brown; at this stage they have wings, but too small to enable them to fly, and when in an erect position their appearance at a little distance is that of a well-armed horseman' (*Journal of Sacred Literature*, quoted by Prof. Driver). Another writer says, however: 'One specimen in my museum is so gaily coloured that it might be mistaken for a gaudy butterfly.'

their faces were as men's faces. In this and subsequent features the demoniacal character of these swarms is brought out; not only are the natural features heightened into terrors, but others are added which do not belong to natural locusts at all.

8. their teeth were as the teeth **of lions.** So Joel i. 6.

9. The word for 'breastplate' (*thorax*) is the scientific name for the breast: so that we might translate: 'They had breasts, as it were breastplates of iron.'

as the sound of chariots. So Joel ii. 5, 'Like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains do they leap.'

they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in
11 their tails is their power to hurt men five months. They
have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name
in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath
the name Apollyon.
12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two
Woes hereafter.
13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice
from the horns of the golden altar which is before God,

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10. And they have tails like unto (the tails of) **scorpions, and stings** (in their tails), by means of which they **hurt men.**

11. They have over them as king. In this too they differ from the locusts of earth, which 'have no king' (Prov. xxx. 27).

the angel of the abyss. There is no word here for 'pit'; see on verse 1.

his name in Hebrew (cf. John v. 2, xix. 13, 17, 20; used only in the Fourth Gospel and this book) **is Abaddon.** This word appears first in the Wisdom Literature of the O. T., where it stands primarily for 'ruin,' 'destruction' (Job xxxi. 12); with the development of the doctrine of Sheol it became the special designation of the 'place of the lost' (Job xvi. 6; Prov. xv. 11); finally, in Job xxviii. 22 it is personified as it is here, and as 'Hades' is personified in Rev. vi. 8. See Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, article by R. H. Charles.

Apollyon. This name seems to be based on the LXX rendering of Abaddon, a word meaning 'destruction,' possibly with an indirect reference to the pagan deity Apollo; it is pointed out that the locust was one of the symbols of his cult. In the Talmud we find Death and Abaddon personified and in control of the angels of destruction.

12. The first Woe is past. It is noteworthy that no account is given, as in the case of the preceding judgement, of the carrying out of this one. The writer's adhesion to the pragmatism of his scheme is not mechanical; it will not be safe to force interpretations either from his consistency or from his inconsistency with himself.

ix. 13–21. *The Sixth Trumpet; the Second Woe.*

13. a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God. This is the altar of viii. 3, the altar of incense at which the angel had added incense to the prayers of the saints. The voice which seems to come from all four corners of the

one saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, 14
Loose the four angels which are bound at the great
river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, 15
which had been prepared for the hour and day and

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altar is the response to these prayers; in that sense it may be called the voice of God. In xvi. 7 it is the altar itself which speaks; but here it is a voice of supreme authority, such as might be looked for towards the climax of this cycle of judgements.

14. This is the only case in which the angel with the trumpet is called upon to do anything but sound. He is commanded to **Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates.** It is tempting, but incorrect, to connect these four angels with the group of four who in vii. 1 were seen 'holding the four winds of the earth.' The angels here are all in one place, not 'on the four corners of the earth'; they are not holding anything, but themselves bound; and there is no reference to winds, or to their work of destruction. Light is thrown upon these perplexing figures by a passage in the *Apocalypse of Ezra*, quoted by Bousset: 'And a voice was heard: let these four kings be loosed which are bound beside the great river Euphrates, which shall destroy a third part of mankind. And they were loosed, and there was a great commotion.' Now it is the function of these angels when unbound to lead forth a mighty army; they too are four in number, and bound beside the Euphrates; and from the way in which they are introduced (the angels) it appears that they were familiar figures; hence it has been concluded that John bases this vision upon old apocalyptic material, possibly induced thereto by the conviction that the anticipation was shortly to be fulfilled through the setting loose of the Parthian armies to attack the West. The Euphrates, in any case, is to be understood literally, in connexion with the age-long association of the district it suggests (Babylon, Assyria, Shinar; see Zech. v. 11) with forces both material and moral which were hostile to Israel. The connexion of the Parthians with anticipated judgement is found in the *Book of Enoch* (lvi. 5): 'In those days shall the angels gather themselves together, and turn eastward to the Parthians and the Medes, and stir up their kings, so that a spirit of unrest comes over them, and chase them from their thrones, so that like lions they break forth from their lairs, and like hungry wolves upon their herds.'

which had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year. That is, in most emphatic language, prepared against the hour appointed for their being loosed in the foreknowledge of God.

month and year, that they should kill the third part
16 of men. And the number of the armies of the horsemen
was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard
17 the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in
the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates *as* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and
the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions;
and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and
18 brimstone. By these three plagues was the third part
of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the
19 brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. For
the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their
tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have
20 heads; and with them they do hurt. And the rest

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the third part of men. Compare the passage quoted above from the *Apocalypse of Ezra.*

16. And the number of the armies of the horsemen. It is left to be inferred that the angels proceed to lead out this great host. The number is the double of that mentioned in Dan. vii. 10—two hundred millions, obviously a figure for an innumerable host. That it consisted of 'horsemen' is in accordance with the connexion of the vision with the Parthians, whose strength lay particularly in their cavalry.

17. Both in their numbers and in their appearance and equipment these armies are such as to strike terror into their foes. They, apparently both men and horses (cf. verse 9), have breastplates which are 'fiery red, smoky blue, and sulphurous yellow,' corresponding to the 'fire and smoke and brimstone' which 'proceed out of their mouths.' It is hard to say whether the writer aims at describing an army of demons, or whether he is only heightening hyperbolically the terrors of an overwhelming army of men; probably, as he looked for judgement to come both through human instruments and through demonic hosts, the features of each become for him interchangeable.

18. the third part: see verse 15, and viii. 12, note.

19. their tails are like unto serpents. The explanation of this strange addition to the imagery is probably to be found in the custom of the Parthians, who bound their horses' tails to a point, combined with their skill in shooting their arrows as they fled.

20, 21. This is a kind of epilogue to the first six Trumpets;

of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they 21
repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of **10**

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although only two have been described as actually fatal to men, yet men have been affected by them all, and, nevertheless, they repented not, but like Pharaoh 'hardened their hearts.' They repented not of their idolatry, worshipping still 'the works of their own hands' (cf. Isa. xliv. 9–20). They continued to fall down before idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone (cf. Dan. v. 4). On the worship of 'devils' cf. Deut. xxxii. 17: 'They sacrificed unto demons, which were no God'; 1 Cor. x. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 1.

which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: so in Ps. cxv. 5–7.

and they repented not of their murders: so in Rom. i. 20, 29. Paul has pointed out the connexion between idolatry and immorality. It is curious to find here combined with murders, &c., the sin of sorcery, which belongs to a different class; it may refer to the special application of sorcery through philtres and the like to procure consent to sin in others.

The Second Woe is past, though the announcement of the fact is held over till xi. 14. Looking back on the six Trumpets it is to be observed that the effects of them all fall upon the unbelievers alone. Those who believe are affected only indirectly. Further, that the whole vision takes place in view of the double vision of the sealing of the faithful and the offering of their prayers for vengeance (viii. 1–5). 'One cannot perceive why this antithesis should point to a Jewish origin, and not just as well to a Christian source for the passage. It is true that chaps. viii and ix contain nothing that is specifically Christian, but they are not on that account Jewish' (Bousset).

x. 1—xi. 13. SECOND GREAT PARENTHESIS.

Here, at the point where we naturally look for the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet, we find a break corresponding to that between the Sixth and the Seventh Seals. This break, however, is longer, and extends to the thirteenth verse of the eleventh chapter, after which the seventh angel sounds. The interval is occupied

heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his
2 feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little

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with two episodical visions, to the first of which there is an introduction. The purpose of these episodes is less clear than that of those in the seventh chapter, but in all probability it is the same, viz. to provide a pause in the unrolling of judgement, and consolation and assurance in the first vision for the Seer, and in the second for the believing dwellers in Jerusalem.

x. 1–5. *Introduction to the First Vision.*

1. And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven. The fact that he sees this angel coming down out of heaven, as though he himself were now upon earth, has caused much perplexity to the commentators. There can be little doubt that up to this point the Seer has recounted what he saw as one who was 'in heaven,' and he does so still, only the heavenly things which are presented to his mind are necessarily presented in the forms of earthly experience. Thus heaven itself has for him a 'sky,' and in that sky he sees now the other strong angel. It is not easy to determine what angel or angels may be referred to in the word 'other'; possibly all the angels who have been mentioned, possibly the angel of v. 2, who also is described as 'strong' and calls for some one to open a book. It is strongly maintained by some (e. g. Dr. Milligan) that in this angel we are to recognize the person of Christ himself. The arguments for this view are chiefly derived from the description, which follows, of the cloud and the rainbow, and the feet 'as pillars of fire.' Against this, however, Alford's arguments seem conclusive: 'Such a supposition would entirely break through the consistency of apocalyptic analogy. Throughout the book angels are the ministers of the Divine purposes, and the carriers out of the apocalyptic procedure, but are everywhere distinct from the Divine Persons themselves. In order to this their ministry, they are invested with such symbols and such delegated attributes as beseem in each case the particular object in view: but no apparent fitness of such symbolical investiture to the Divine character should induce us to break through the distinction and introduce indistinctness and confusion into the book.' Further, if this angel is the Lord himself, it will be difficult to find from whom the voice comes in verse 4.

In the description which follows, the various features, though they find a parallel in the description of chap. i, are assigned to the angel as the commissioned messenger of the Most High. At the same time, the choice of emblems is significant of covenant mercy as well as overwhelming power.

2. a little book: the word is a strong diminutive. 'a tiny little

book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and
his left upon the earth; and he cried with a great voice, 3
as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders
uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders 4
uttered *their voices*, I was about to write: and I heard a
voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the
seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And 5
the angel which I saw standing upon the sea and upon
the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware 6

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book,' and there is a contrast apparently intended with the 'Book' of chap. v, which, moreover, was sealed, whereas this is open. Its smallness may be emphasized also in contrast to the vast figure of him who holds it.

The Seer beholds this awe-inspiring figure bestriding both earth and sea, as though claiming both for the sphere of his authority.

3. and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. The article is inserted by the R. V., and suggests that these seven thunders represented an idea already familiar; see below.

uttered their voices: here and also in the following verse (where the words 'their voices' are supplied to complete the sense) the literal meaning is 'spake': the utterances of the seven thunders were articulate, such as the Seer was desirous and prepared to write down.

4. a voice from heaven. The voice is the same voice as that which spake to John in i. 11, commanding him to write in a book 'what thou seest'; it is the voice of Christ, now bidding him to refrain. That it comes 'from heaven' does not mean that the Seer has left the heavenly sphere; see verse 1 and note.

the things which the seven thunders uttered. It is of course useless to speculate as to what these things were, or why the Apostle was forbidden to disclose them. He seems to have had before his mind a cycle of Thunders corresponding to, and supplementing, the Seals and the Trumpets. It is an interesting suggestion, but one for which there is no evidence, that there may have been a Seven-Thunder cycle of visions in some current Jewish Apocalypse, which he desired to dismiss. Any historical interpretation of the thunder-voices is out of the question; whatever the Apostle heard he buried it in silence.

x. 5–11. *The Vision of the Little Book.*

5. his right hand. In Dan. xii. 7, on which this part of the vision is based, the angel ('the man clothed in linen') lifted up

by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be time no
7 longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which

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both his hands 'unto heaven'; for the action as a solemn asseveration cf. Gen. xiv. 22; Exod. vi. 8, marg.

by him that liveth for ever: so in Dan. xii. 7.

who created, &c.: this exhaustive description of God's universal creatorship prepares the way for an announcement which is to affect all creation.

that there shall be time no longer. There are two possible explanations of these words. They may predict the cessation of Time, in the sense that timeless eternity begins. To this we should find a parallel in the recently discovered *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xxxiii. 2): 'In the beginning of the eighth millennium there is no reckoning of time, and no end, neither years nor months, neither weeks nor days nor hours.' And again, at the day of Judgement 'the times shall perish' (Bousset). Or, the explanation may be found in connecting the proclamation with the answer given to the cry of the martyr-saints (vi. 11): 'It was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little time.' This time of their waiting is to be at an end. This second explanation seems to be more in harmony with the spirit of the book.

7. in the days of the voice of the seventh angel. The vision, which has just looked back to the souls beneath the altar, in chap. vi, now looks forward to the blowing of the last trumpet in xi. 15.

then is finished: better, 'then shall be finished'; the construction being a characteristically Hebrew one.

the mystery of God: see note on i. 20; revelation by mystery, by parable, by process, will be at an end. The thought answers strangely to that in our Lord's words (John xvi. 23): 'In that day ye shall ask me nothing,' i. e. no questions.

according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants. The translation in the R. V. is an attempt to give the force of the verb, which means 'declared the good news.' The construction is the same as in Acts xiii. 32. Cf. Gal. iii. 18. The 'mystery' will be 'finished,' because men shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but now face to face; the good news of the kingdom will be completely and finally realized, and men will no longer need to say to one another, 'Know the Lord.'

he declared to his servants the prophets. And the 8
voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard it* again
speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which
is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the
sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, 9
saying unto him that he should give me the little book.
And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it
shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall
be sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of 10
the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth

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the prophets. The use just before of the specifically Christian word for making known the good news of God makes it possible, if not probable, that by these are meant the 'prophets' of the Christian Church as well as (if as well as) those of the old dispensation. Compare the Seer's own claim for himself to speak as a prophet, i. 3, xxii. 7.

8. the voice which I heard from heaven: i. e. the voice which in verse 4 forbade him to write, the voice of the Son of Man.

9. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up. This episode is closely connected with the passage in Ezek. ii. 8—iii. 3, where the prophet is prepared for speaking the word of God unto the rebellious house of Israel by being caused to eat 'a roll of a book': 'Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go, speak unto the house of Israel.'

it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. Ezekiel's roll was sweet in his mouth 'as honey for sweetness' (cf. Ps. xix. 10); but there is no reference to its being also bitter, even though 'there was written therein lamentations and mourning and woe.' Both the resemblance and the contrast are instructive. Ezekiel expresses the satisfaction of a man who is filled with the word of God, has received God's message, even though it be one of judgement. John dwells rather on the mingled quality of the contents of the revelation; and this arises not merely from the fact that the prophecies with which he is entrusted contain at once evil and good, judgement and glory, for the wicked and the righteous respectively; but also it expresses the mingled disinclination and readiness of every true prophet to be the mouthpiece of the Divine wrath.

10. And I took the little book, &c. The eating of the book signifies the receiving into himself by the Apostle of the new revelation. Where then are we to find the contents of the book, of this further revelation? It is generally agreed that they are

sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was
11 made bitter. And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy
again over many peoples and nations and tongues and
kings.

11 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and

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unfolded in the remaining prophecies, but there is less agreement as to where its contents begin and how far they extend. Seeing, however, that the seventh Seal belongs to the scheme of the earlier visions, while the section which immediately follows this (xi. 1-13) is both episodical and more prophetical than apocalyptic in character, it seems best to regard the contents of the little book as beginning to be set forth with the opening of chap. xii. As a matter of fact a new departure is made at that point; the revelation enters upon a new field and expresses itself in terms of a new series of figures. On the other hand, it is difficult to distinguish any point in the remaining chapters where a similar break might be said to mark the close of the contents of this 'little book.' It is probable, therefore, that we should see its contents in all that follows chap. xii. The writer's attention is thenceforth directed specially to the church, its struggles and discipline, its foes and friends, its victory and peace. These are the contents of the 'little book,' as the judgement-purposes of God toward the whole world were peculiarly the contents of the great sealed book of chap. v.

11. And they say unto me. This can only mean angels or heavenly powers, though why they take the place of the voice that has just spoken is not clear.

Thou must (for so is the Divine will) **prophesy again** (as he had already done in the former part of the book). This is a further indication that a new and important division is about to begin. A like burden was laid upon Paul, 'to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel' (Acts ix. 15). There is an evident looking forward here to the contents of chaps. xiii, xvii, and xviii; while the form (prophetic) in which the writer's ministry is to be realized links the centre of the book with both the beginning (i. 3) and the end (xxii. 19).

The tenth chapter is of great importance for the understanding of the spirit and construction of the Apocalypse, and also for the defence of its unity. It looks both back and forwards, and forms a kind of clamp or bracket by which the two halves of the work are held together.

xi. 1, 2. *Introduction to the Second Episode.* These two verses, being somewhat loosely connected with what follows, are best regarded as an introduction to the prophecy of the Two Witnesses;

one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the

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they serve to concentrate the attention of the reader upon the 'holy city' in which the witnesses are to prophesy, and to give assurance in advance that the power of Antichrist which is to prevail over them shall not prevail completely for ever.

a reed like unto a rod. Cf. Ezek. xl. 3: 'With a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed'; Zech. ii. 1: and Rev. xxi. 15.

and one said: *lit.* 'saying,' without any antecedent being expressed. The reading which is translated in the A.V. is an early attempt to fill in the omission; and if we must identify the speaker, it is probably an angel who both gives the reed and addresses the Seer.

Rise. It is not to be inferred that the Seer was prostrate or on his knees; the word is used as in 1 Chron. xxii. 19, Mark iii. 3, as a general summons to action.

measure. There is a threefold significance attached to the act of measuring in Scripture symbolism. It may be (1) with a view to building or rebuilding, as in Zech. ii. 1-3; Jer. xxxi. 39; Ezek. xl; or (2) with a view to destruction, as in 2 Kings xxi. 13; Isa. xxxiv. 11; Amos vii. 7-9; or (3) it may be for preservation in peril, and out of surrounding destruction, as in 2 Sam. viii. 2. As there is no opening for the first meaning here, the choice lies between the second and third. Of these the second is certainly the commoner, and there are commentators who would find it here, but verse 2, where that which is omitted from the measuring is devoted to destruction, leaves us no alternative but to understand that this measuring is for preservation.

the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. The commentators are sharply divided here between those who take the measuring and the things which are measured to be all and wholly symbolical, and those who take them to be at least in the first instance literal and referring to the material temple. The arguments for the former view will be found clearly stated by Dr. Milligan, whose conclusion is this: 'These, the most sacred parts of the temple-buildings, can only denote the most sacred portion of the true Israel of God. They are those disciples of Christ who constitute his shrine, his golden altar of incense whence their prayers rise up continually before him, his worshippers in spirit and in truth. These, as we have already often had occasion to see, shall be preserved safe amidst the troubles of the church and the world. In one passage we have been told that they are numbered; now we are further informed that they are measured.' These statements are, of course, both true and important, but it is still very doubtful whether they are the intended teaching of these verses. Each one of the words requires to be forced in order to bring out this interpretation.

2 altar, and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two

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The word translated 'temple' does not designate alone the shrine, the Holy of Holies, but the Holy Place, including the Holy of Holies and the altar. There is no precedent for taking the 'altar' in a figurative sense as a symbol of any body of people; and if the church or any section of it were symbolized by the 'temple' or the 'altar' or both, why should they be described also without any figure as 'them that worship therein'? It is a yet more serious, and indeed a fatal objection to this figurative interpretation, if, as it will appear below, we are compelled to understand 'the holy city' in the next verse of Jerusalem on earth. The temple and the altar must stand for so much of the temple area as is within the 'outer fore-court,' i. e. the inner fore-court in which the altar (of burnt offering) stood and the Holy of Holies. Then we get, what otherwise seems impossible, a perfectly simple meaning for the phrase 'them that worship therein,' i. e. in the fore-court of believers.

2. the court which is without: the 'outer court' of Ezek. x. 5. The Court of the Gentiles, with the city which lies beyond it, is to be given over to the heathen.

the holy city. So Jerusalem is called in Matt. iv. 5; xxvii. 53: cf. Isa. xlviii. 2; Dan. ix. 24. The epithet was practically a technical one, and it need cause no difficulty if we see cause to find the same city of Jerusalem described in verse 8 as 'spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.'

shall they tread under foot: cf. Luke xxi. 24, 'And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' With this so closely parallel prediction of Jesus before us, it is hardly possible to escape the conclusion that here also is a prophecy of the siege and fall of Jerusalem, coupled with an assurance that the Holy Place and God's true worshippers who worship therein shall escape destruction.

forty and two months: so in xiii. 5 power is given unto the beast to 'continue forty and two months.' The same length of time is described in the next verse as 1,260 days, and in Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7, as 'a time and times and the dividing of a time,' i. e. three years and a half. The period probably has an historical basis in the actual or estimated duration of the persecution of Antiochus (see Driver's note on Dan. vii. 25). Or the figure may have been arrived at like other figures in months. And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they 3

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the Apocalypse, by breaking seven, the perfect number, into two halves. In either case it had become a kind of technical figure for the duration of the rule of wickedness, or of its incarnation in Antichrist. Any attempt to reckon out the figures either as days or years is foredoomed to failure as an employment of the Apocalypse for a purpose for which it was not intended, and an ignoring of our Lord's distinct and repeated warnings that the day or the hour is not to be known by men.

If, as we have seen reason to think, the prophecy of these verses refers to the earthly Jerusalem (and, indeed, were it not so), it follows in all probability that it was written before the siege and capture of the city by Titus in A. D. 70. It is partly the recognition of this fact that makes some of the commentators so anxious to establish a figurative interpretation; for it seems to them to involve the writing of the whole book before that date, and this is against the weight of the evidence both internal and external. That difficulty need, however, be no longer felt if we recognize the possibility that John quotes from earlier apocalypses. There is in these two verses not a little that has a specifically Jewish colouring, the 'measuring,' the description of God's guarded people as them that worship in the temple.

If we find ourselves compelled to date these verses before the fall of Jerusalem, and the book as a whole five or more years later, it will not therefore be necessary to abandon the unity of the book. All the conditions would be satisfied if John found these verses already in existence, and assigning to them a spiritual interpretation (it is here that that may come in), gave them a place in his own Apocalypse, as an introduction to the prophecy of the Two Witnesses. See further in the Introduction, p. 52.

xi. 3-13. *The Prophecy concerning the Two Witnesses.* This section is in the form, as it breathes the spirit, of prophecy rather than of apocalyptic. The material of it is largely drawn from the prophets of the O. T.; the speaker in verse 3 can hardly be other than God Himself, speaking as He speaks by the mouth of the prophets. At the same time we see in the same chapter the prophetic manner passing over into the apocalyptic, and the appearance of the figure most particularly characteristic of the later literature, the figure of Antichrist.

3. And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy. The translation in the A. V. expresses the sense of what is a Hebrew construction in the Greek; the meaning is: 'I will cause my witnesses to prophesy.'

Who or what is meant by these 'two witnesses' is one of the

shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore
4 days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees
and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of

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most debated questions in the interpretation of this book. In the description which follows we seem to catch glimpses of so many different solutions, echoes from the O. T., hints of actual events in Jerusalem, parallels to the sufferings and resurrection of our Lord, that it is little wonder if some of the wisest have abandoned the attempt to explain the prophecy. Once more these figures are either symbolical, or they are predicted as historical. Probably the latter mode of interpretation is the one to be preferred. That is to say, the Apostle intended to set forth these figures and their experiences as part of the events which were to be transacted in Jerusalem before the end.

The primary basis of the prediction is to be found in the passage in Mal. iv. 5: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come'; with this cf. Matt. xvii. 10; Mark ix. 11. In the apocalyptic literature this expected forerunner of the Messiah is described as a 'witness.' The idea of the two witnesses is probably connected with the passage in Zechariah, to which there is distinct allusion lower down (chap. iv): 'Then said he, These are the two anointed ones (R. V. 'sons of oil') that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.' By one of them is doubtless meant Elijah; the other was by most commentators of the early church identified with Enoch, but by some mediaeval ones with Moses. The latter theory has in its favour one at least of the points in the following description (v. 6), and the facts that the two figures of Moses and Elijah appear together in the narrative of the Transfiguration, while their names also, if not connected, follow one another in the passage in Malachi (iv. 4, 5).

a thousand two hundred and threescore days. The duration is the same as that of the heathen domination in v. 2, but the periods are not necessarily, though they are probably, identical.

clothed in sackcloth. This fixes the character of their prophecy; they are to be preachers of repentance, announcers of judgement; cf. Jer. iv. 8, vi. 26; Jonah iii. 5.

4. the two olive trees. In Zechariah (iv. *passim*) the two olive trees seem to feed with their oil the (seven-branched) candlestick on either side of which they stand. These 'sons of oil' represent Zerubbabel and Joshua, the ecclesiastical and the civil head of the restored theocracy. The Apostle connects the olive trees and the 'candlesticks' together, and finds them both typical of the two witnesses.

the earth. And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire 5
proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their
enemies: and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in
this manner must he be killed. These have the power 6
to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of
their prophecy: and they have power over the waters
to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with
every plague, as often as they shall desire. And when 7
they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that
cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them,
and overcome them, and kill them. And their dead 8

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5. desireth: or A. V. 'will,' which is ambiguous; so John v. 40, vii. 17.

fire proceedeth, &c. : cf. Elijah, 2 Kings i. 10; Jer. v. 14, 'I will make my words in thy mouth fire'; *Sirach* ii. 1888, 'Elijah the prophet arose as fire, and his word burned like a flame.'

6. These have the power to shut the heaven. So Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 1 ff.; cf. Luke iv. 25), and that for a like period of three years and a half.

and they have power over the waters, &c. So Moses (Exod. vii. 19). These two figures are to be as it were personifications of the law and the prophets.

7. The 'finishing of the testimony' of the witnesses appears to correspond with the 'finishing of the mystery of God' in x. 7, and if so, this phrase links chaps. x and xi together, and both to xii ff., where the 'beast' and the war he wages are described at length.

the beast: here mentioned for the first time; a more suitable translation would perhaps be 'monster.' He is to rise **out of the abyss** (see note on ix. 2), as is also the monster of xvii. 8. But this feature is not sufficient to establish an identification; the beast here stands for the power and manifestation of Antichrist in general. The phases and stages of the manifestation come to be differentiated in subsequent chapters.

shall make war. In Dan. vii. 21 it is the 'other horn' of the fourth beast which 'made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.'

8. their dead bodies: the word here and in verse 9^a is in the singular, but there is no distinction of meaning to be drawn from a comparison with the plural in verse 9^b. There is a peculiar indignity involved in the neglect or refusal to give the bodies

bodies *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was
9 crucified. And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do *men* look upon their dead bodies

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burial, which indicates that the city is to be in sympathy with, or under the fear of, the beast.

the great city: it is said, in spite of the last clause of this verse, that by this we are to understand not Jerusalem, but the 'great city' of the succeeding visions, i. e. Babylon or Rome, literally or spiritually. But the reasons given are quite insufficient, and particularly it is incorrect to say that Jerusalem is never called 'the great city.' In the fifth book of the *Sibylline Oracles* it is three times so described (154, 226, 413).

which spiritually is called (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 14, only) **Sodom and Egypt.** For the form in which the thought is cast, cf. Gal. iv. 25: 'Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is.' For the parallel between Jerusalem and Sodom, cf. Isa. i. 10, where the rulers of Jerusalem are addressed as 'ye rulers of Sodom'; in Ezek. xvi. 46–56, the wickedness of the great city is elaborately shewn to be worse than that of her sister (Sodom). On the other hand, there appears to be no known passage in which Jerusalem is allegorically identified with Egypt; nevertheless, such an identification with what had been 'the house of bondage' for God's people lay near at hand.

where also their Lord was crucified. Those who, like Alford, have decided that 'the great city' is not Jerusalem but its spiritual antagonist, Rome or Babylon, find great difficulty in dealing with this plain statement: 'the fact is that the literal Jerusalem in whom was found the blood of all the saints who had been slain on earth, has been superseded by that wider and greater city, of which this prophecy speaks: and as the temple in prophetic language has become the Church of God, so the outer city in the same language has become the great city which will be the subject of God's final judgements.' The historical allusion is too definite to be thus explained away; it loses its whole point if it does not identify the place where the witnesses lose their lives with that where their Lord himself had suffered in the flesh.

9. And from among the peoples, &c. Both the grammar and the combination of words connect this section with the rest of the Apocalypse; cf. v. 9, vii. 9, xiv. 6: and also with other Johannine writings, cf. John i. 35, iii. 1, xiii. 21, and especially xvi. 17; 1 John iv. 13; 2 John 4 (Greek).

look upon: for the A. V. 'shall see': so the present tense is

three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies
to be laid in a tomb. And they that dwell on the earth 10
rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall
send gifts one to another; because these two prophets
tormented them that dwell on the earth. And after the 11
three days and a half the breath of life from God entered
into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great
fear fell upon them which beheld them. And they 12
heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them,
Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in
the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And in 13

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to be substituted for the future in several cases below: the prophetic diction begins to pass over into the narrative, as though the events were beheld by the writer.

three days and a half: the period corresponds with the duration of their activity, three years and a half, in the same way as the 'three days' that our Lord lay in the grave corresponds with the traditional three years of his ministry.

10. they that dwell on the earth. It is not necessary to limit this by translating 'in the land,' *scil.* of Palestine; the meaning is 'the ungodly in the world,' all who accepted the rule of Antichrist, against whom therefore the witnesses had directed their prophecies of judgement.

and they shall send gifts: to express common rejoicing, cf. Esther ix. 18, 22; Neh. viii. 10, 12; also Luke xxiii. 12.

11. the breath of life from God: better, as in the A. V., 'the Spirit of life.' The whole imagery of the passage is closely connected with Ezek. xxxvii, the vision of the dry bones. See especially verse 10: 'And the breath (or wind, or Spirit) came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet'; and the promise in verse 14, 'I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live.' This prophecy of the resurrection of the witnesses is a presentation in a concrete form of the assurance given by Paul: 'If we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection' (Rom. vi. 5).

12. And they heard: there is another well-attested reading, 'I heard,' which has internal evidence slightly in its favour.

Come up hither. Cf. Matt. xxv. 34.

in the cloud. The article marks the cloud-chariot as being a well understood feature in connexion with the passing of the that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed

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witnesses. It may be an indirect reference to the cloud within which Moses and Elijah passed from the sight of the apostles on the mount of Transfiguration (Luke ix. 34, 35; Mark ix. 7, 8).

13. seven thousand: this, like the 'tenth part' of the city, is a symbolical figure, standing for the appointed number, but a great one: it would represent probably about a tenth part of the inhabitants.

gave glory to the God of heaven: this is taken by some to mean only that they acknowledged God's power, like the evil spirits which 'believe and tremble.' But in view of the parallel passages such as Luke xvii. 18, Rev. iv. 9, and of the prediction in Mal. iv. 6, to which it is natural to expect an allusion here, it is better to understand that this is a mark of conversion.

the God of heaven: this phrase, which is characteristic of the later books of the O. T. (Ezra i. 2; Nehemiah *passim*; Dan. ii. 18, 44), occurs in the N. T. only here and in xvi. 11.

14. This epilogue to the sixth trumpet would naturally be looked for at the end of chap. ix; cf. viii. 13, ix. 12. It does not follow that the episodical visions of x—xi. 13 are to be regarded as part of the result of the sixth trumpet. They may have had an independent origin, and yet as they have a function, and that a very important one, in the development of the subsequent chapters, to which, as we have seen, they serve as a kind of new introduction, the writer has judged this the best point to insert them.

xi. 15–19. *The Seventh Trumpet.* The seventh Trumpet, like the seventh Seal, represents the climax of progressive judgement, and here again we should expect to find at least the ushering in of the final crisis, the great day of the Lord. But, as in viii. 1, so here, we are to find preparation made for the opening of a new procession of visions. The circles of heavenly beings who have been spectators of the drama of judgement up to this point, break forth into praise of the Most High, expressing their assurance that whatever power Antichrist may have, or seem to gain, it will be but temporary, for has not God already begun

great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.
16 And the four and twenty elders, which sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped
17 God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because thou
18 hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the

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to manifest His wrath, and also His will to reward His servants, the prophets and the saints.

15. great voices. Contrast the silence which followed the opening of the sixth Seal. It is not said from whom these voices proceed, but the parallel in vii. 9, 10 suggests that it was from the 'great multitude' which stood before the throne.

The kingdom of the world (cf. Matt. iv. 8–10) **is become** the kingdom **of our Lord, and of his Christ:** *lit.* 'is become our Lord's and his Christ's.' Though the final struggles on earth have still to take place, their issue is foreseen, and already realized in heaven. Cf. xii. 10, and the quotation from Ps. ii. 2 in Acts iv. 26, 'his Christ' being the N.T. equivalent of 'his anointed' in the psalm.

he shall reign: there is no indication as to who is meant; it is sufficient to observe that the Apostle draws no distinction.

16. the four and twenty elders. See note on iv. 4.

fell upon their faces, &c. Cf. v. 14.

17. Lord God, the Almighty. See i. 8, and note.

which art and which wast. R.V. omits the third clause which has been added from i. 4, 8, iv. 8: the Judge and Deliverer has already come. 'This ascription of thanks is the return for the answer to the prayers of the saints furnished by the trumpets' (Alford); and also the exulting acknowledgement that, now that God has manifested His glory, the final victory is nigh at hand. The spirit of this hymn of praise is closely parallel to that of Pss. xcvii and xcviii.

18. to thy servants the prophets: among whom the writer would probably reckon himself; cf. x. 7. The description—'prophets,' and 'saints,' and 'them that fear thy name'—is probably intended to be exhaustive of the church.

saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

12 And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman

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19. And there was opened: better, 'And the temple of God that was in heaven was opened.' This is no mere accessory to the vision, but the result, at least the primary one, of the blowing of this Trumpet. It is in the presence of this open temple, with the ark of the covenant plain within it, that the things about to be narrated are to take place. The scene depicted in chap. iv has been replaced by that which sets it forth in symbol, the temple of God's Presence and the ark of His covenant-mercy. The reference to the ark is in accordance with the Jewish tradition that, when the first temple was destroyed, the ark was carried off to a place of safety by Jeremiah, to be restored to Israel at the time of Messiah's appearing; cf. 2 Macc. ii. 1–8; *Apocalypse of Baruch*, vi. 7–10.

and there followed lightnings, &c. Each of the other cycles, the Seals (viii. 5) and the Bowls (xvi. 18), closes with a similar description.

Once more this section is linked, as by living tissue, to what has gone before and to what follows after. 'Verse 16 looks back to the vision of the Seals; verses 17, 18 give a short anticipation of that which is to follow—wrath of the heathen (xiii ff.), wrath of God (xix, &c.), judgement upon the dead, reward of the servants of God (xx), destruction of the destroyers of the earth (xvii, xviii)' (Bousset).

xii–xiv. THIRD PARENTHESIS: THE OPPOSING FORCES.

xii. *Vision of the Woman, the Man child, and the Dragon.* This chapter constitutes one of the greatest problems in the interpretation and in the literary study of the book. This must have been felt already by every intelligent reader, and it is confirmed by the history of its exposition. Nearly every theory which attacks the unity of the book has fastened in the first place on this chapter. To shew its true character, and thereby to safeguard the book's unity, is one of the achievements of more recent investigation. This will be best understood at the close of the exposition.

arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,
and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she 2
was with child: and she crieth out, travailing in birth,
and in pain to be delivered. And there was seen 3
another sign in heaven; and behold, a great red
dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon

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1. a great sign (for A.V. 'wonder'). The word itself, as well as the adjective, indicates an appearance of special significance; cf. Matt. xxiv. 30, 'the sign of the Son of man,' and the demand of the Pharisees for 'a sign' (Luke xi. 16); it is specially characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, as the name for the miracles of Jesus. The appearance of this 'great sign' here marks a new beginning in the structure of the book, one which is indeed the beginning of the end.

was seen. In contrast to all the other visions (except xi. 19, xii. 3), there is nothing to shew by whom this vision was seen. Contrast xiii. 1, 11, xiv. 1, &c.

in heaven. The scene that follows is transacted not in heaven, wherein it is impossible to think of a 'wilderness,' but 'in the heavens,' or, as we might say, 'in the sky'; in verse 7 the words are the same, but the sense is different; see note there.

a woman. This figure has been variously interpreted: by some of the Virgin Mary, by others of the Christian church, by others again of the Jewish church. What John probably understood by her was the ideal community of God's people, first in its Jewish form, in which it gave birth to Jesus, and then in its Christian form, in which it was persecuted by the dragon (verse 13) and fled into the wilderness (verse 6).

arrayed with the sun, &c. This imagery may be connected with Canticles vi. 10, and with Gen. xxxvii. 9. A curious verse in the *Testament of Naphtali* ('and Judah was bright as the sun, and under his feet were twelve rays') suggests that there is some connexion of ideas between the twelve stars and the tribes of Israel.

2. In Mic. iv. 9 f. the distress suddenly falling upon Israel is described under the picture of the birth-pangs coming upon a travailing woman; in Isa. lxvi. 19 the coming of the Messianic period is represented under the figure of an easy and successful delivery for Israel figured as a woman. 'This parallel certainly points to the fact that this vision refers somehow to the birth of the Messiah or of the Messianic period, and that in the woman we are perhaps to see a personification of Israel' (Bousset).

3. And . . . another sign, &c. See above on verse 1.

a . . . dragon. From verse 9 (cf. xx. 2) we learn that this

4 his heads seven diadems. And his tail draweth the
third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them
to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman
which was about to be delivered, that when she was
5 delivered, he might devour her child. And she was
delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the
nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught

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dragon was identical with the 'old serpent' called 'the Devil and Satan.' The form in which he is represented here, as lying in wait for the offspring of the woman, anticipates the description of the First Monster in xiii. 1, but has its roots in ancient tradition. From Ps. lxxiv. 14 we learn that Leviathan, which was a sea-monster of dragon type, was understood to have several heads, and the 'ten horns' come from the description of the fourth 'beast' in Dan. vii. 7. The red colour of the dragon suggests at once the ravages of fire and the shedding of blood; the diadems upon the seven heads that it is through kings that he exercises his power.

4. The hugeness and power of the monster are suggested by this verse, which is founded on Dan. viii. 10, where the little horn is said to 'cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground' and trample upon them.

and the dragon stood before the woman, &c. Whatever may have been the original application of this feature, it readily lends itself to a Christian interpretation, whether we think of Herod prompted by the evil one to seek the life of the infant Jesus, or, more generally, of the hostility and hatred which pursued the Christ to his death upon the Cross.

5. who is to rule (*lit.* 'shepherd'; cf. ii. 27, xix. 15) **all the nations with a rod of iron.** A direct quotation from the description of the Messiah in Ps. ii. On the theory that the Apostle is here adopting earlier apocalyptic material, this quotation might equally well form part of the original, or be inserted by himself to make plain the interpretation which he put upon the passage.

and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. This point shews that, though transacted before the eyes of the Seer 'in the heavens,' the vision-events did not take place 'in heaven.' The words, 'and unto his throne,' clearly harmonize with the mind of a writer who speaks of 'the throne of God and of the Lamb.' But it is difficult to understand how this would be a natural description of the ascension of the man Christ Jesus, if it were from the hand of the Apostle, or how all other events in the life of Jesus could be passed over by him except the Birth and the Ascension.

up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman 6
fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared
of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two
hundred and threescore days.
And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels 7

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6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, &c. The woman, as understood by John, must now be thought of as the church in its Christian form, and the historical event which appears to be predicted is the flight of the Christians at Jerusalem 'unto the mountains' (Matt. xxiv. 16) round about Pella, before the final destruction of the city.

where she hath (*lit.* 'where she hath there'—a Hebraic form of expression) **a place prepared of God.** In verse 14 it is described simply as 'her place.'

that there they may nourish her. There is no indication to whom this function is assigned. This experience of the woman-Israel is obviously parallel to that of the natural Israel, and again to that of Elijah in the desert.

a thousand two hundred and threescore days. See xi. 2, 3, and note. The period is identical with that described as 'a time, and times, and half a time' in verse 14; and in both passages is the conventional number which, from Daniel downwards, had been assigned as the duration of the times of final stress and struggle, 'the sufferings that lead up to Christ' (1 Pet. i. 11).

The contents of this verse being practically reproduced in verse 14, it is best to take it as anticipatory of that which actually takes place after the conflict in heaven now to be referred to. This makes it unnecessary to ascribe the 'sign in heaven' to any particular period, e.g. after the birth of Christ; what the vision proceeds to narrate is that event which, once transacted in the heavenly sphere, governs the issue of the struggle now to be transferred to the earthly.

xii. 7–12. *The war in heaven.*

7. Michael: cf. Jude 9; according to apocalyptic writings one of the four archangels, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Phanuel. In Dan. x. 13 he is the one who specially concerns himself with the Jewish race, and (xii. 1) appears as their champion. He was said to be the holder of the secret of the mighty 'word,' by which God created heaven and earth (*Enoch*, lxix. 14), as well as 'the angel who spoke to Moses in the Mount' (Acts vii. 38), and a mighty intercessor for the sins of the people. It was entirely in accordance with the conceptions of later Judaism that Michael

going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon
8 warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither
9 was their place found any more in heaven. And the
great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that
is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole

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should appear as captain of the hosts of the Lord. 'Here the figure of Michael thrusts aside that of the Messiah; for it is Michael, and not the Child, that overthrows Satan when storming the heavens—a fact which speaks strongly for the Jewish origin of most of Revelation xii' (R. H. Charles, 'Michael,' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*).

and the dragon warred and his angels, i. e. the 'fallen angels,' whose fall and fate are described in the beginning of the *Book of Enoch.*

8. neither was their place found any more in heaven. If this be pressed so as to raise a difficulty as to what place they had in heaven, previously to the conflict, the explanation probably is that, even to Satan and his fallen angels, a place was assigned by Jewish thought in (the lowest) heaven; though evil, they were spiritual. In Isa. xxiv. 21 they appear to be referred to in the phrase 'the hosts of the height,' and to be identified with the fallen deities of the heathen (see O. C. Whitehouse, art. 'Demon,' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*). The underlying conception probably is that they attempted to storm the highest heaven, and in the end were cast out of heaven altogether. Cf. Isa. xiv. 12 ff. 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star (Lucifer), son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol (marg.), to the uttermost parts of the pit' (abyss).

9. was cast down. Cf. Luke x. 18; John xii. 31.

the old serpent. Cf. xx. 2; an allusion to the story of the Fall (Gen. iii. 1, &c.).

called the Devil and Satan. 'The Devil,' as a name for the evil one, does not appear in the O. T. but in the N. T. from Matt. iv. 1 and on. On the other hand, 'Satan,' the 'accuser' (see especially Zech. iii. 1, 2), is so named both in Job *passim* and in Ps. cix. 6. In the N. T. the latter word has not wholly lost its etymological meaning, and once at least stands for 'slanderer'; see 1 Tim. iii. 11 compared with iii. 6, and Dr. Horton's note there. The threefold description gathers up the primitive, the prophetic, and the N. T. conception of the supreme Power of Evil.

This vision of the conquest of evil already accomplished on the

world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels
were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice 10
in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the
power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority
of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast
down, which accuseth them before our God day and
night. And they overcame him because of the blood of 11

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higher plane of existence, 'in heaven,' has a very close bearing on all that is to follow. 'There is a battle, but Christians advance to it as conquerors; before it begins victory is theirs'; cf. John xvi. 33.

10. Those who distinguish different 'sources' or 'redactions' of the Apocalypse almost unanimously assign verse 11 to the latest or Christian editor. But it is difficult to see why they separate it from verse 10, in which the writer again speaks in the first person (the only case in this chapter), and where the thought presents striking parallels to v. 12, 13, and vii. 12.

a great voice in heaven: cf. xi. 12, 15, xix. 1. The voice may be that of a multitude, e. g. of the angels, who acknowledge those 'who loved not their life' as their brethren.

the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom. With this as realized in heaven contrast the situation as still felt on earth, 'the tribulation, and kingdom, and patience' (i. 9). This is the alchemy of faith, that it transmutes 'the tribulation, and kingdom, and patience' of the believer into 'the salvation, and kingdom, and power' of the saint.

the authority. The word adopted by the R. V. indicates what is possibly suggested by the Greek, viz. that this 'authority' is conferred upon the Christ; it is the same which Jesus claims for the 'Son of Man,' Matt. ix. 6; John v. 27; cf. John i. 12. Cf. also Rev. xiii. 5.

which accuseth them, &c. The hostility of the evil one is as continuous as the praise of those who have overcome his power (iv. 8). Bousset quotes from *Enoch* (xl. 7 ff.): 'The fourth voice I heard as it turned aside the Satans, and permitted them not to come before the Lord of Spirits, to accuse the dwellers on the earth.' Alford mentions a Rabbinic tradition to the effect that Satan accuses men all the days of the year except the Day of Atonement.

11. And they overcame. As the subject here is clearly the 'brethren' of the previous verse, it is difficult to see how this can be a description of the victory gained in heaven and by 'Michael and his angels,' unless the somewhat proleptic connexion be

the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony;
12 and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought

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explained as the Apostle's interpretation of the true contents of the heavenly victory.

because of the blood of the Lamb, &c.: *lit.* 'on account of,' because it had been shed. 'Their victory over Satan was grounded in, was a consequence of, his having shed his precious blood; without that the adversary's charges against them would have been unanswerable' (Alford). To this is added, as a further ground of their victory, the word of their testimony, i. e. the word to which they testify, the revelation of God given to them by Jesus. Both causes of their victory are thus ultimately outside themselves, though both are appropriated and made effectual by their faith.

they loved not their life. We seem to catch here an echo of our Lord's teaching in one of its most essential principles: 'He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' (John xii. 25; cf. Luke xiv. 26), for 'loved-not' is construed as though it were the single word; they carried their 'not-love' of self so far that they died.

12. Therefore rejoice, O heavens. This follows upon the announcement in verse 10 that the accuser is cast down out of heaven; all strife there is at an end for ever, but on the other hand it is now transferred to earth, on which therefore woe is pronounced.

a short time. The same period is described as 1,260 days in verse 6 and as 'a time, and times, and half a time' in verse 14; it is short because 'the end is at hand,' but the very shortness of his opportunity increases the fury of Satan.

xii. 13-17. *The woman escapes.*

13. This verse takes up the story of the woman where it was dropped at verse 6, the intervening section having served to explain the presence of the dragon upon earth, and his peculiar wrath against those who 'keep the commandments of God.' John probably saw the 'persecution' of the dragon in the suffering that overtook both Jews and Christians through the siege and capture

forth the man *child*. And there were given to the woman 14
the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into
the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished
for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of
the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth 15
after the woman water as a river, that he might cause
her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth 16
helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth,

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of Jerusalem; or (if we take the woman as strictly representing for him the true Israel according to faith) in the earliest persecution which had befallen the church.

14. the two wings of the great eagle. The definite article which is marked as present by the R. V. renders unsatisfactory all of the explanations which have been offered, even the supposed parallel with Exod. xix. 4. Some definite power was doubtless symbolized by the figure, but the Apostle has given us no clue to suggest how it is to be understood.

into the wilderness. See verse 6, and note.

15, 16. The interpretation of these difficult verses is a sore trial to the sober-minded commentator. Dr. Milligan's (*Expositor's Bible*, p. 214) may be an excellent homiletic application, but it is hardly an interpretation. The most suitable is probably that of Alford, who lays stress on the numerous parallels found in this chapter with the experiences of Israel escaping from Egypt to Canaan. 'There we have the flight into the wilderness, there the feeding in the wilderness; there, again, the forty-two stations corresponding to the forty-two months of the three years and half of this prophecy; there, too, the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, not indeed in strict correspondence with this last feature, but at least suggestive of it.' He understands the river—of the Roman armies which threatened to sweep away Christianity in the wreck of the Jewish nation; or of the persecutions which followed the church into her retreats, but eventually became absorbed by the civil power turning Christian; or of the influx of heretical opinions from the pagan philosophies, which tended to swamp the true faith. It is true that we may properly see in one, or in all, of these events, the historical analogy to what is symbolically predicted here; but is it conceivable that the Apostle, with any of these generalities before his mind, would have thrown them into the form of these symbols? and indeed does not the interpretation leave much, and that precisely the most perplexing part, of the imagery uninterpreted? The earth **helping the woman** by opening its mouth and

and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out
17 of his mouth. And the dragon waxed wroth with the
woman, and went away to make war with the rest of
her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and

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swallowing up the river, finds no parallel in the crossing of the Red Sea, neither in any event in the history of the church. This is recognized indeed by Alford, who says: 'I confess that not one of these [interpretations] seems to me satisfactorily to answer the conditions; nor do we gain anything by their combination. But anything within reasonable regard for the analogies and symbolism of the text seems better than the now too commonly received historical interpretation, with its wild fancies, and arbitrary assignment of words and figures.' It seems certainly more in accordance with a true respect for the writer and his work to suppose, as many indications would lead us to do, that in this chapter he is incorporating earlier material, that these verses, in their original setting, had a simple interpretation in some marvellous deliverance of God's people from their enemies, and that John adopted them, along with the rest of the chapter, because he saw in their imagery a general analogy to the experience of the church after the ascension of Christ.

17. Seeing that by the seed of the woman—the 'male-child' in verse 5—the Messiah is plainly to be understood, **the rest of her seed** can only mean his brethren by faith in him—his disciples. The prediction then is that when the woman, the community with which he had been most closely connected, had escaped either by flight to Pella, or through the cessation of local persecution, the dragon's fury was turned upon a wider circle of disciples, upon the church beyond Palestine. This is indeed what is to be described in the next chapter, to which this one is therefore both directly and indirectly an introduction.

The more minutely this chapter is studied the more will the theory of its origin suggested above commend itself on many grounds. It is the only alternative to surrendering the book's unity of authorship. The chapter is seen to differ widely from its context in language (saving the exceptions noted in verses 5, 10, 11, 17), in imagery, in the plane of thought on which it moves. On the other hand, were it already in existence, as a piece of Jewish apocalypse, it is easy to see how the Apostle might be led to insert it here, with its many points of correspondence to Christian tradition and to Christian experience, and with it many points of attachment to what was to follow. If we neglect for a moment the verses which contain specifically Christian thought, we get a perfectly coherent and impressive hold the testimony of Jesus: and he stood upon the **13** sand of the sea.

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems,

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narrative, from the standpoint of a Jew during the Maccabæan struggles. When we restore these again, we get the interpretation put upon that narrative by an apostle of Christ, who saw in it a prediction of the birth and glory of the Lord, and of the sufferings of his church.

the testimony of Jesus. The word 'Christ' is omitted by the R. V. in accordance with the MS. evidence. For the phrase as descriptive of the true disciples cf. vi. 9, i. 2; also xiv. 12.

xiii. 1–10. *The vision of the monster with the ten horns.* The vindictive wrath of the 'dragon,' now concentrated on those brethren of Jesus, displays itself in a twofold incarnation of his power on the stage of human history: (1) As the father of cruelty and blasphemy he 'gives power' to the first monster, the Roman state, with its ten emperors (verses 1–10), and (2) as the father of lies (John viii. 44) he animates the second monster, the false 'prophet,' which is the minister and agent of the first (verses 11–17).

1. and he stood. The reading here adopted by the R. V. is that of all the best MSS. It makes the 'dragon' of xii. 17 still the subject of this clause. Nevertheless, many good editors (Alford, Holtzmann, Spitta, Bousset) keep the first person as less artificial and in accordance with such precedents as Dan. viii. 2.

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. The whole passage should be carefully compared with Dan. vii. 2 ff., 'I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven brake forth upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea,' &c.

Here doubtless the sea stands for the Mediterranean, from beyond which the empire of Rome rose before the eyes of the Jews; cf. 4 Ezra xi. 1, 'Behold, an eagle arose from the sea.'

having ten horns, &c. The order of the horns and the heads (reversed in the R. V.) is different from that in the description of the dragon (xii. 3), and it is the 'horns' here that carry 'crowns.' It is generally agreed that the 'horns' stand for rulers or kings of the respective kingdoms, but not so generally agreed as to which of the Roman emperors are here designated. We may begin with Cæsar or with Augustus, and, reckoning all who put on the purple, find the tenth in Vespasian or in Titus; or, omitting the three (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius) whose reigns were of trifling duration, arrive at Nerva or Trajan; others again, by reckoning the usurpers as one, make the tenth Domitian.

2 and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and
3 his throne, and great authority. And *I saw* one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered
4 after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they wor-

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names of blasphemy: the blasphemous name on each head is doubtless that of Augustus, conveying in its Greek form (*Sebastos*) even more of reverence and worship. Cf. xvii. 3 and Dan. xi. 36. The ten horns wearing diadems probably refer to all ten emperors (including Galba, Otho, and Vitellius)—the seven horns with the names of blasphemy to the seven among these ten (excluding the 'pretenders') who reigned long enough to have temples erected to them and to be known in Asia as *Sebastos*. So that the seventh in the one case is the same as the tenth in the other, viz. Titus.

2. like unto a leopard . . . bear . . . lion: uniting therefore the characteristics of the three first monsters in Dan. vii. The Apostle probably means to indicate that the Roman monster has combined in itself the power and the qualities of the earlier world-empires.

the dragon gave him his power, &c. The Roman empire with which the Christians have to struggle owes its power and prestige and dominion to Satan, and Satan has been overcome in heaven (chap. xii).

3. one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death. The participle is the same used to describe the Lamb 'as it had been slain,' the beast Antichrist thus becoming a diabolical counterpart of the Christ, as here in his death so later on in his return to life. It is generally admitted now that the 'wounded head,' which was healed, is identical with the 'beast' in xvii. 8, 'that was and is not and yet is' (cf. xvii. 11), and that both represent the Emperor Nero. See note on xvii. 8, and on the Nero legend that this emperor was not dead, or, if dead, would return to life again, and would come back to wreak vengeance on Rome and his enemies; see Introduction, p. 56.

and the whole earth wondered after the beast: so in xvii. 6-8.

4. because he gave his authority unto the beast. The power

shipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and
who is able to war with him? and there was given to 5
him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;
and there was given to him authority to continue
forty and two months. And he opened his mouth 6
for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name,
and his tabernacle, *even* them that dwell in the heaven.
And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, 7

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behind the monster is the Satanic power of the dragon. Again, in the worship which is jointly offered to Satan and his vice-gerent on earth, there is a horrible travesty of the worship due to 'Him that sitteth upon the throne,' and to the Lamb, and it was being performed in all the temples devoted to the cult of the reigning Cæsar.

Who is like unto the beast? A parody, as it were, of the praise of God, e. g. in Exod. xv. 11; Isa. xl. 5.

5. a mouth speaking great things: so in Dan. vii. 8; cf. also Dan. xi. 36 (of Antiochus), and Ps. xii. 3.

authority (cf. xii. 10, note) **to continue** (or, 'to act,' 'to work') **forty and two months.** In Dan. xi. 28 it is predicted that Antiochus 'shall do exploits' (A. V.).

forty and two months. Cf. xi. 2, note, also Dan. vii. 25, and Prof. Driver's note there. The predicted period of Antiochus' persecution became the conventional duration of the reign of Antichrist, in whatever person he were to be manifested.

6. for blasphemies against . . . his tabernacle, even **them that dwell in the heaven.** If the R. V. be right in omitting (with the preponderance of MS. authority) 'and,' then the 'tabernacle' of God is in apposition with 'them that dwell (*lit.* 'tabernacle') in heaven,' and we have an anticipation of the thought in xxi. 3; if, with Bousset, we keep 'and,' God's tabernacle is heaven (not the earthly temple), and those that dwell there the holy angels.

7. to make war with the saints (i. e. with the holy people of God upon earth), **and to overcome them.** So in Dan. vii. 21, 'I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.' There is considerable MS. authority, however, for the omission of the whole phrase. If it is really part of the text, it predicts the fearful struggle which is to follow on the return of Nero, or other final manifestation of Antichrist. It is a struggle which will be world-wide. Bousset quotes from *Barnabas* (lxvii. 7), 'But the king of Babylon, who hath now destroyed Sion, shall arise and boast himself over the people,

and to overcome them: and there was given to him
authority over every tribe and people and tongue and
8 nation. And all that dwell on the earth shall worship
him, *every one* whose name hath not been written in the
book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the
9 foundation of the world. If any man hath an ear, let
10 him hear. If any man *is* for captivity, into captivity
he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the
sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the
faith of the saints.

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and shall speak great things in his heart in the presence of the Most High.'

authority over every tribe, &c. A universal empire, as wide as that offered by Satan to Christ, is now conferred upon the Beast—for a season.

8. Worship is offered to the Cæsar-monster only by those whose names have **not been written in the book of life of the Lamb.** See iii. 5, and note. The book is further described here and in xxi. 27 as belonging to the Lamb and specifically to the Lamb as slain.

from the foundation of the world. Is this clause to be connected with 'written,' or with 'slain'? The order in which it stands certainly suggests the latter, but the parallel expression in xvii. 8 ('whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world') speaks strongly for the former. Alford, however, argues that this citation is 'irrelevant,' and maintains that it is the death of Christ which, having been foreordained 'from the foundation of the world,' is said to have *taken place* in the counsels of Him with whom the end and the beginning are one.

9. If any man hath an ear, &c. This phrase, serving to lay a solemn emphasis on what has just preceded, forms a link between this passage and the Letters to the churches; cf. ii. 7, and note.

10. Both the text and the meaning of this verse are difficult to ascertain. The best supported text yields the rendering which is found in the R. V. The text translated in the A. V. may be understood to convey to the sufferers by persecution the assurance that their sufferings will not go unavenged, and a parallel will be found in Matt. xxvi. 52, 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' And the same will be the meaning of the R. V. in the second clause. The R. V. in the first clause, however, suggests that

And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; 11
and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake
as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the authority of 12
the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth
and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast,

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the fate of each man is determined by the will of God; and we may bring the second clause into harmony with the first by accepting a (less well attested) reading, 'If any is to be slain with the sword, with the sword is he to be slain'; so practically Alford. This is supported by the parallel in Jer. xv. 2, 'Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword'; and it leads up naturally to the pregnant reminder, **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints:** it was by recognizing and accepting as the will of God for him even the extreme of persecution that might befall that the individual Christian would shew his endurance and approve his faith.

xiii. 11–17. *The vision of the Second Monster, the 'beast' from the land.*

11. And I saw another beast: a power like unto the first in essential character, 'hostile to God's flock and fold.' From xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10, it is plain that this 'beast' and the 'false prophet' are identical. All attempts to find a single historical figure (e. g. Simon Magus) represented here are vain. Alford, who finds in the first beast 'the aggregate of the empires of the world as opposed to Christ and his kingdom,' sees in the second 'the sacerdotal persecuting power, which, gentle in its aspect and professions, was yet cruel in its actions.' The best explanation is found by combining the relative passages cited above, viz. that this second beast stands for the heathen priesthood, and specially for the priestly guilds set apart for the service and maintenance of the emperor-worship. That it rises 'from the land' may signify that this priesthood was native-born.

he had two horns like unto a lamb. Possibly from Dan. vii. 3, where it is a ram which has two horns, but more probably the image is suggested by the shape of the headdress worn by these priests. In their fancied resemblance to a lamb they are as 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' This is made plain when they speak, for they speak the dragon-language.

12. The authority exercised by the second beast is wholly derived from the first, as his, in turn, from the dragon; and he uses it to promote the worship of the first, i. e. of imperial Rome personified in the emperor.

'Observe that it is the death-stroke of the beast that here is

whose death-stroke was healed. And he doeth great 13
signs, that he should even make fire to come down out
of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. And he 14
deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of
the signs which it was given him to do in the sight
of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth,
that they should make an image to the beast, who hath
the stroke of the sword, and lived. And it was given 15
unto him to give breath to it, *even* to the image of the
beast, that the image of the beast should both speak,
and cause that as many as should not worship the image
of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, the 16

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spoken of, and no longer that of one of its heads. More and more, as the prophecy proceeds, the head with the wound and the beast himself, Nero "redivivus" and the Roman "imperium" are identified. In Nero "redivivus" the writer sees the whole power and horror of the empire concentrated' (Bousset).

13. great signs: as Jesus predicted of the false prophets (Matt. xxiv. 24), and as Paul anticipates concerning Antichrist, 'whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thess. ii. 9).

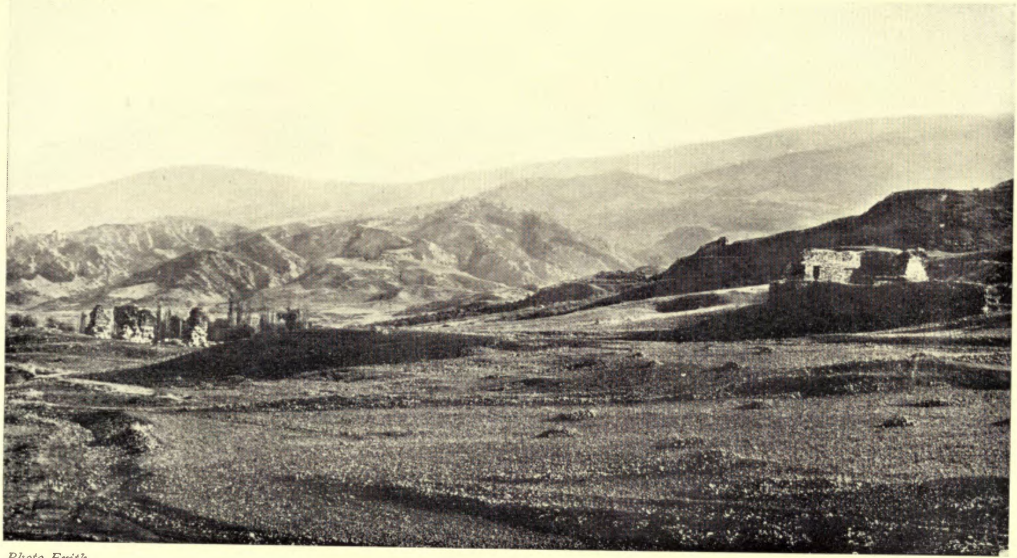
fire. There is possibly an allusion to some actual exhibition of quasi-magic, such as was performed by the magicians of Pharaoh.

14. he deceiveth: so in ii. 20, 'the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess . . . both teacheth and deceiveth my servants'; cf. Matt. xxiv. 24.

saying to them . . . that they should make an image to the beast. The function of the second beast, the priests of the Cæsar, is here plainly declared: they are to make every effort to spread the imperial cult. That they had already been peculiarly successful in this in Western Asia we have already learnt from the Letters to the churches; e. g. ii. 13, note.

15. to give breath to it, &c. The reference here is probably once more to pretended miracles wrought by the priests; the commentators adduce those assigned to Simon Magus ('ego statuas moveri feci et animari exanima'), to Apollonius of Tyana, and Apelles of Ascalon, the last at the court of Caligula.

should be killed. Death was the punishment for refusal to worship the image of the emperor. This became the test for Christianity, as we see from Pliny's famous *Letter to Trajan*: 'As



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small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no 17 man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. He that hath under- 18 standing, let him count the number of the beast; for it

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for those who said they neither were nor ever had been Christians, I thought it right to let them go, since they recited a prayer to the gods at my dictation, made supplication with incense and wine to your statue, which I had ordered to be brought into court for the purpose, together with the images of the gods.'

16. a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead. It is hardly necessary to record the many guesses which have been made at the meaning of the 'mark of the beast.' The most hopeful have been those which connected it with the branding of slaves or soldiers, or the tattooing of the religious emblem of a god (cf. 3 Macc. ii. 29). Verses 16 and 17 taken together make it plain that the mark (1) Contains or consists in the name or number of the beast; (2) has some general connexion with buying and selling; and (3) that it has some special reference to the Roman emperor who is associated with the beast. The most probable solution of these conditions has recently been propounded by Deissmann (*Bible Studies*, pp. 241 ff.), who finds a clue in the seals which are stamped upon many papyrus documents of the first and second centuries. These seals were inscribed with the name of the reigning emperor and with the year of his reign; some of them possibly contained his effigy; they were necessary upon documents relating to buying and selling, and the technical name for them was *charagma*, the word here translated, 'mark.' A facsimile of one of these seals, which is in the Berlin Museum, is given in Deissmann's book. It cannot be said that their use wholly explains the 'mark'; the receiving of the mark upon the hand or the forehead remains unexplained. But if the use of such a seal were imperative in buying or selling (and its use might be arbitrarily extended as a means of persecution), and if the use of it were recognized by Christians as an acknowledgement of emperor-idolatry, it would not be difficult to understand how those who traded with it might be said to have accepted on themselves 'the mark of the beast.'

xiii. 18. *The number of the Beast.*

18. Here is wisdom. 'These words seem to direct attention to the challenge which follows.'

is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six.

14 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the

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it is the number of a man. The possibility of designating a man by a number is founded, of course, on the fact that both in Greek and in Hebrew the only numerals in use were the letters of the alphabet. Thus every man's name had a certain numerical equivalent, ascertained by adding together the values of the separate letters. And it was indeed a favourite form of speculation to connect names and ideas through their equivalent numerical values. The meaning here (in spite of xxi. 17, which is different) is probably that the meaning of the number can be found, for it is the name of a (well-known) man.

and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six. An almost incredible number of names have been found to contain or forced to yield this number. Mohammed, Napoleon, and Luther are only a few of the most striking. Two only deserve consideration. One is *Lateinos* = *Latinus*, i. e. the Latin or Roman emperor or race. This suggestion, originally made by Irenæus, has obtained a good deal of support from modern commentators (e. g. de Wette, Bleek, Düsterdieck, Elliott), but suffers from the objections that there is no case of the word occurring in this form, and that there seems no connexion between Latium—its inhabitants and its kings—and the seven emperors of Rome. The other and more probable explanation sees in the number the numerical reckoning of the name of 'Nero Cæsar,' spelt in Hebrew letters. Objection has been made that this requires the word for 'Cæsar' to be written 'defectively'; but this is not without a parallel. And this interpretation explains better than any other the 'various reading' of the number which is attested and discussed by Irenæus. If Nero's name be written 'full' (Neron), the value of the name and title is 666; on the other hand, if the last letter ('n') of his name be dropped, we have the value of 616, which is the alternative reading in some MSS. Fuller details will be found, and answers to objections in Bousset's *Commentary*, and in Holtzmann's *Handcommentar*, in both of which this is the solution adopted.

xiv. The Vision of The Lamb on Mount Sion followed by the Harvest and the Vintage of the World.

Following the principle of contrast, of which we have already had several illustrations, the Apostle in the opening of this chapter narrates a vision of the heavenly glory and power of the Lamb. The preceding two chapters have set before us the three great enemies of the church—the Dragon, the first Beast, mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from 2 heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was* as

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and the second Beast—in their efforts and their partial or temporary success. 'The picture thus presented is fitted in the highest degree to depress and discourage.' It has even been announced that power is given to the Beast 'to war with the saints and to overcome them.' To this dark picture John now adds a counterpart, a picture of 'those that be for us,' of the Lamb and his attendant host, the glory that is reserved for those that resist and endure.

xiv. 1-5. *The Lamb on Mount Sion.*

1. the Lamb. The R. V. makes it plain that it is *the* Lamb of v. 6, &c., who again appears.

on the mount Sion. Interesting parallels are quoted from 2 Esdras ii. 42, 'I Esdras saw upon the mount Sion a great multitude, whom I could not number, and they all praised the Lord with songs'; xiii. 35, 'But he [Messiah] shall stand upon the top of the mount Sion,' &c. Whether John has in view the earthly or the heavenly Son cannot, and need not, be decided; the probability is in favour of the former.

a hundred and forty and four thousand: i. e. a definite and typical number. It would be too much to say that they are the same persons as are referred to as 'sealed' in vii. 4; the absence of the definite article suggests the contrary. Possibly we have here to do with a conventional apocalyptic formula, in this case applied to those who, like the seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal, had 'kept themselves from idols,' and resisted the Beast.

having his name, and the name of his Father. This reading of the R. V. is well established. It is a silent indication of whom men understood to be the Lamb, and another case of the writer's setting Christ side by side with God; see iii. 13, vii. 3. There is an evidently intended contrast with those who, having yielded to the Beast, have received *his* name on their foreheads (xiii. 17).

2. as the voice of many waters. See i. 15, note, and add to references there 4 Ezra vi. 17, 'And, behold, there was a voice [of God] that spake, and the sound of it was like the sound of many waters.'

of a great thunder. Cf. vi. 1, xix. 6. This voice, thunderous in its fullness, and yet melodious in its harmony, proceeds 'from

3 *the voice* of harpers harping with their harps: and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out
4 of the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These

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heaven,' from angel-choirs, not from the 144,000, who are probably upon earth; theirs, however, is the power to learn the 'new song.'

3. a new song. Cf. v. 9, and note. 'Heaven is revealed to earth as the home-land of music; of music thus remote from what is gross or carnal; exhibiting likewise an incalculable range of variety, which rebukes and silences perverse suggestions of monotonous tedium in the final beatitude' (C. Rossetti).

before the throne, &c. This carries the thought back to the great vision in chap. iv, which is, indeed, the background against which the other vision appears.

no man could learn the song. 'The song had regard to matters of trial and triumph, of deep joy and heavenly purity of heart, which none other among men but these pure and holy ones are capable of apprehending. The sweetest and most skilful harmonies convey no pleasure to, nor are they appreciated by, an uneducated ear: whereas the experienced musician finds in every chord the most exquisite enjoyment. Even so this heavenly song speaks only to the virgin heart, and can be learnt only by those who accompany the Lamb withersoever he goeth' (Alford).

purchased. Cf. v. 9: the same word as in 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price.'

4. virgins. The word is here used for the first time as a masculine. These clauses are certainly to be taken in a literal sense, and as reflecting a high estimate of Christian asceticism; cf. Matt. xix. 12, and 1 Cor. vii. 1 ff. But though there may be special privileges attached to virginity, it does not follow that they are higher; we must take along with this passage the recognition and consecration of the marriage-state which may be inferred from the imagery of chaps. xxi, xxii. The exaltation of virginity here is a counterpoise to the false teaching, the 'doctrine of Balaam,' which had invaded more than one of the 'churches' (ii. 4, 20).

which follow the Lamb, &c. This is still a characteristic were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth 5 was found no lie: they are without blemish.

And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having 6 an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, 7

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of their earthly life; the phrase is therefore an echo of our Lord's word (Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24 f.).

to be **the firstfruits.** Purchased like all the rest of the redeemed from the power of sin and from among the mass of men, these, who have this special virtue, are a special offering to God. In Jas. i. 18 the whole of those there redeemed are a firstfruits of creation.

5. in their mouth was found no lie. Cf. Ps. xxxi. 2 (LXX), 'Neither is there guile in his mouth'; Isa. liii. 9; Zeph. iii. 13, and Ps. xiv. 1 ff. What had been predicted of the Messiah is now a characteristic of his saints.

without blemish. As in Jude 24; Col. i. 22; 1 Pet. i. 19.

xiv. 6–13. *Vision of three angels.* These three angels successively announce details of the coming judgement: (1) General, with a summons to worship; (2) in particular, upon Babylon-Rome; (3) in particular, upon every worshipper of the Beast.

Bousset points out that the very multiplicity of theories, assigning various verses and fractions of verses in this passage to various sources and editors, is a proof that they cannot be split up. Every verse looks either backwards or forwards (see below), and verse by verse can be shewn to be marked by the author's style and vocabulary. The passage is an introduction to the great scenes of judgement which begin with xiv. 14.

6. in mid heaven. See viii. 13, note.

an eternal gospel: with the indefinite article (R. V.). Alford and others maintain that, in spite of the absence of the definite article, we must render 'the eternal gospel' (cf. Rom. i. 1). It is difficult, however, to see 'the gospel' in the technical sense in the proclamation which follows, and better to give the word a more general meaning, connected probably with the 'mystery of God' (x. 7), i.e. the announcement of the near approach of the end, which for those who believed was 'good news.'

every nation, &c. Cf. xiii. 7.

7. With the contents of this verse compare 'the gospel of the kingdom of God,' as it was preached by Jesus, 'Saying, The and give him glory; for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, which hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon
10 his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his

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time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel' (Mark i. 15).

give him glory: as the affrighted remnant did in xi. 13.

and worship him, &c. A striking parallel to the summons of Paul to the men of Lystra: 'We . . . bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is.'

fountains of waters. Cf. viii. 8, 10, xvi. 3, 4.

8. Fallen, fallen is Babylon. An anticipation of the judgement upon Rome to be described in chap. xviii. The cry is an echo from Isa. xxi. 9; cf. also Jer. l. 2, liv. 8.

which hath made all the nations to drink of the wine, &c. Cf. xvii. 2. Two ideas are here combined: the 'wine of her fornication,' of which the nations have drunk at her hands, and the cup of Divine wrath which she and they are to drink at the hand of God; see Jer. liv. 7, xxv. 15–17; also Rev. xviii. 6, where the two ideas are again combined.

9. worshippeth the beast. See xiii. 15, 16.

10. he also. As well as Babylon.

the wine of the wrath of God. Cf. xvi. 19, xix. 15.

The figure comes from Ps. lxxv. 8, 'In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine foameth; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same: surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out'; cf. Job xx. 3. It may be traced further in Isa. li. 17–23; Hab. ii. 15; Jer. xxv. 27, xlix. 12.

which is prepared unmixed: *lit.* 'which has been mixed unmixed'; but the word for 'mixed' had acquired the technical

anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the
presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment 11
goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day
and night, they that worship the beast and his image,
and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the 12
patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments
of God, and the faith of Jesus.

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sense of 'prepared,' inasmuch as it was only by diluting that wine became drinkable. In the LXX version of Ps. lxxv. (lxxiv.) 8, the cup in the hand of the Lord is 'full of mixture of wine unmixed.'

with fire and brimstone. Cf. the description of Topheth in Isa. xxx. 33, 'The pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' In the whole passage Isa. xxxiv. 8–10 is plainly in the writer's mind ('the smoke thereof shall go up for ever'). The imagery, applied by Isaiah to the 'day of the Lord's vengeance,' is used also to describe earlier judgements (Deut. xxix. 23; Job xviii. 15), and is derived ultimately from the narrative in Gen. xix. 24 of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is instructive to trace the development of the symbolism springing from the circumstances of an event in history, providing the traditional features, first of *any* great judgement, then of 'the day of the Lord,' and, finally, of the judgement of Christ.

in the presence of the holy angels. Cf. *Enoch*, xlviii. 9, 'And I will give them over into the hands of Mine elect: as straw in fire, and as lead in water, they will burn before the face of the holy, and sink before the face of the righteous.'

11. the smoke: so xviii. 9, xix. 3, xx. 10.

they have no rest. In poignant contrast with the creatures who worship God, who 'have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord' (iv. 8).

'Immediately before the great, decisive struggle the writer holds up before the eyes of the faithful the fate of every one who succumbs in the conflict with the Beast. The Apocalypse is a declaration of war against the worship of the Cæsars' (Bousset).

12. Here is the patience of the saints: cf. xiii. 10 (18). The saints know that endurance is expected of them (Matt. x. 22, xxiv. 13); here, in the struggle with the Beast, is the field wherein they are to shew it.

they that keep, &c.: in apposition to 'the saints.' There

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them.

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the

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is plainly an allusion to 'the rest of the seed of the woman' (xii. 17). Here, however, for 'the testimony' is substituted 'the faith' of Jesus, i.e. faith in him; cf. Mark xi. 22; Rom. iii. 22; Gal. ii. 16.

13. a voice from heaven saying, Write: as in x. 4 a like voice commanded him not to write.

Blessed are the dead: who from now onwards die in the Lord. Whatever more general meaning we may have learnt to attach to these words, they have here some special significance which is connected with the phrase 'from henceforth.' Those 'die in the Lord' who die maintaining their faith in Jesus, and to many the testing opportunity of martyrdom is close at hand. By this promise they are encouraged to endure unto the end; but their 'blessedness' is not due only to the fact that they die 'in the Lord,' but that they die after the end has begun. 'The harvest of the earth is about to be reaped; the vintage of the earth to be gathered. At this time it is that the complete blessedness of the holy dead commences: when the garner is filled and the chaff cast out. And that not on account of their deliverance from any purgatorial fire, but because of the completion of this number of their brethren, and the full capacities of bliss brought in by the resurrection' (Alford).

that they may rest, &c. This may depend upon 'die' (they die in order to rest), or, taking 'that' in the sense of 'because' (xxii. 14; John viii. 56, ix. 2), it may be an explanation of 'blessed' (blessed because they rest). The latter is more probable.

their works follow with them. Their 'works,' their Christian character and life, their 'deeds of weekday holiness' are not lost; these are the things men 'carry out' with them. The best commentary on the phrase will be found in Matt. xxv. 34–40.

xiv. 14–20. *Vision of the harvest and vintage of the earth.* Almost without exception the critics, who trace different documents and different hands in the composition of the book, fasten upon this section as a proof of their contentions. They assert that it plainly marks the conclusion of an apocalypse, and that the final judgement is not only ushered in, but completed here. On the other hand, it is surely only the preparation for judgement that is still described; the earth is reaped, but the separation of the wheat from the tares is still to follow; the cloud *I saw* one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the temple, crying with 15

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winepress is trodden, but the marriage-supper has still to be described; the fate of the wicked may be indicated, but the lot of the righteous, who are to 'shine forth as the sun,' is also an essential factor in the 'end.' The passage is not difficult to understand if we take it, like the preceding visions, as an anticipatory announcement of what is afterwards to be described in detail.

14. a white cloud. The imagery comes from Dan. vii. 13, 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man' (R. V.); cf. Mark xiv. 62; Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7.

like unto a son of man: cf. i. 13. According to Prof. Driver (*ad loc.*) the phrase in Daniel 'denotes simply, in poetical language, a figure in human form'; but shortly after the book was written the figure began to be interpreted personally and directly applied to the Messiah. This is seen most plainly in the *Book of Enoch*, where, in fact, 'the Son of Man becomes a recognized title of the Messiah (see Driver's *Daniel*, pp. 102 f., and R. H. Charles, *Book of Enoch*, particularly pp. 312–17). A whole world of thought lies between the suggestive words in Daniel and the definite rounded conception as it appears in *Enoch*.' In *Enoch* it denotes a supernatural person. It is in this developed sense, developed during the apocalyptic period, that our Lord accepts and claims the title for himself. And he gave to it a yet deeper spiritual significance, especially by combining with it the conception of the suffering servant in Isaiah. 'Whilst therefore in adopting the title "the Son of Man" from *Enoch*, Jesus made from the outset supernatural claims, yet these supernatural claims were to be vindicated not after the external Judaistic conceptions of the *Book of Enoch*, but in a revelation of the Father in a sinless and redemptive life, death, and resurrection' (Charles). For John, who had known Jesus, the phrase describes the Lord from heaven returning in more than Messianic glory.

a golden crown: so in xix. 12, 'many crowns' (diadems).

15. another angel: i.e. another besides the one previously mentioned. It is pressing the language too far to argue from this phrase that the figure on the cloud is also that of an angel; even though this angel is represented as giving instruction to the seated figure, it is only as the messenger of the will of God. 'The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing.'

a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth
thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for
16 the harvest of the earth is over-ripe. And he that sat on
the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth
was reaped.

17 And another angel came out from the temple which
18 is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another
angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over
fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had
the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle,
and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for
19 her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle
into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth,

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out from the temple: *sc.* the heavenly temple of chap. viii.
Send forth. Cf. Mark iv. 29.
the harvest of the earth is over-ripe: better 'fully ripe'; *lit.* 'is dried up.'

16. To the question whether this reaping of harvest symbolizes the ingathering of the wicked, or of the saints, or of both together, Alford with considerable hesitation replies that the harvest is the ingathering of the saints, and the vintage the assembling of the wicked for judgement. So too Milligan: 'The latter is the harvest of the good; the former is the vintage of the evil.' On the other hand, the passage in Joel iii. 13, to which this is closely parallel, makes harvest and vintage alike the figures of judgement, in which there is no such distinction; so in Jer. li. 33 the 'harvest' is the time of God's vengeance. It is probably better to assume that the thought of the separation and separate fate of the two classes is not yet here in this anticipatory prediction, which foretells, under the double figure, the gathering of all to judgement, and anticipates the issue for the wicked.

18. out from the altar. Cf. viii. 3; also vi. 9, ix. 13.

that hath power over fire. In the *Book of Jubilees,* ii, we find, 'angels of the spirit of fire,' 'angels of hail,' &c. So in Revelation, 'angels holding the four winds' (vii. 1), and the 'angel of the sun' (xix. 7). The angel of fire comes out of the altar of burnt-offering.

thy sharp sickle: or 'pruning-knife.' The word in its feminine form is used in classical Greek both for the 'sickle' and for the 'pruning-knife.'

and cast it into the winepress, the great *winepress*, of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden 20 without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvel- **15**

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19. into the winepress. The figure is taken from Isaiah (lxiii. 1–6), in which 'it is not the Messiah, nor the servant of Jehovah who is pictured (treading 'the winepress alone'), but Jehovah.' Cf. Lam. i. 15, and Zech. xiv. 1–4.

20. without the city. Numerous suggestions are contained in this phrase: Zech. xiv. 4, the feet of the Lord 'shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem'; according to Zech. xiv. 10, 'the king's winepresses' were a familiar feature external to the city; according to Joel, the judgement was to take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat: and there 'without the gate' (Heb. xiii. 12) Jesus had suffered, 'treading the winepress alone'; the scene of judgement therefore is here laid in the same place, 'without the city.'

blood from the winepress: so in Isa. lxiii. 3.

even unto the bridles of the horses: cf. *Enoch*, i. 3, 'And in those days the fathers together with their sons will be smitten in one place, brothers will fall in death one with another until it streams with their blood like a river. And the horses will walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners, and the chariot will be submerged to its height.'

a thousand and six hundred furlongs. The number is certainly a typical one; but no satisfactory explanation of it has yet been suggested.

xv–xvi. THE VISION OF THE SEVEN BOWLS.

'Nothing can more clearly prove that the Revelation of St. John is not written upon chronological principles than the scenes to which we are introduced in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the book. . . . We are now met by another series of visions setting before us judgements that must take place before the final issue. This is not chronology; it is apocalyptic vision, which again and again turns round the kaleidoscope of the future, and delights to behold under different aspects the same great principles of the Almighty's government, leading always to the same glorious results' (Milligan).

xv. *The preparation for the Bowls.*

1. another sign: as in xii. 1, where see note.

lous, seven angels having seven plagues, *which are* the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire; and them that come victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing
3 by the glassy sea, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works,

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having seven plagues. See Lev. xxvi. 21, 24.

which are **the last, for,** &c. This order (R.V.) marks the connexion of the clauses; these are the last plagues, because in them (Bousset, Holtzmann, 'after them') the wrath of God is 'filled up.'

2. a glassy sea (iv. 6, note) **mingled with fire.** The added clause, of which no satisfactory explanation can be given, does not affect our impression that this is an allusion to the same feature in the heavenly scene as is referred to in chap. iv.

While this phrase (cf. v. 7) links the chapter with the early part of the book, the second part of the verse links it with the chapters that immediately precede, in which the Beast, his image, mark, and number have been described.

that come victorious. It is unfortunate that even the R. V. does not bring out the identity of the original word, 'those that overcome.' The whole expression is a pregnant one = 'those that overcome and so have escaped from the beast,' &c.; though the escape may have been by the death of martyrdom.

by the glassy sea: i. e. upon its shore, as the Children of Israel were standing by the shore of the Red Sea when they sang the song of Moses.

harps. Cf. v. 8, xiv. 2.

3. the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb. It is one song, one which catches up the triumph of God's people on the occasion of their first deliverance 'with an outstretched arm' (Num. xii. 7; Exod. xiv. 31), but passes on into the yet more jubilant triumph of those who have been caused to triumph in Christ (2 Cor. ii. 14). 'In this great victory all the triumphs of God's people are included and find their fulfilment.'

the servant of God. Cf. Exod. xiv. 31.

This 'song' contains the echoes of many phrases in the O. T.; it has also been noticed that its structure shews the *parallelism* characteristic of Hebrew poetry.

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord. Cf. Ps. xcviii. 1, cxi. 2, &c.

O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are
thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, 4
O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy;
for all the nations shall come and worship before thee;
for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

And after these things I saw, and the temple of the 5
tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and 6
there came out from the temple the seven angels that
had the seven plagues, arrayed with *precious* stone, pure

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the Almighty: see i. 8, note. The word occurs nine times in the Apocalypse, and only once besides in the N. T.

righteous . . . are thy ways. Cf. Ps. cxliv. 17.

thou King of the ages. 'Saints' (A. V.) is certainly wrong, but there is another reading, equally well attested with 'ages,' viz. 'nations'; the latter has further support in Jer. x. 7, from which this and the following clauses appear to be quoted.

4. holy. The precise Greek word is used of God only here and in xvi. 5.

all the nations shall come, &c. Cf. Ps. lxxvi. 9; Isa. lxvi. 23.

The three explanatory clauses may be taken as giving successive reasons for the fear and glory of God; or the pause in thought may be after 'holy,' and the two following clauses may explain respectively the first and second thoughts in the verse, 'all nations,' &c., answering to 'Who shall not fear?' and 'thy righteous acts made manifest' explaining the recognition of God's holiness. The parallelism of structure favours the latter interpretation, as does also the parallel in xvi. 5.

This scene in heaven, preparatory to the pouring of the Bowls, corresponds with that of viii. 3-5, preparatory to the sounding of the Trumpets. There the prayers, here the praises, of God's redeemed are presented before Him.

5. the temple of the tabernacle . . . was opened: as already in xi. 19. It is the same temple, and the meaning is not that it was opened again, but that the events which follow were transacted in presence of that open temple; but here the feature of its contents which is emphasized is the testimony, the Tables of the Law which bore witness to the holiness and justice of God, whereas in xi. 19 it is the Ark to which attention is drawn—the symbol of the covenant of Divine grace.

6. arrayed with precious **stone.** This curious feature is due to a various reading which has been adopted by the R. V. It is strongly attested bv MS. authority, but as it differs from that

and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden
7 girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave unto
the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath
8 of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple
was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from
his power; and none was able to enter into the temple,
till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be
finished.

16 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to
the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls
of the wrath of God into the earth.

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of the **A. V.** only by a single letter, and only yields sense at all by the insertion of the word 'precious,' it is best to regard it as due to a very early mistake of a copyist, and keep the old reading, 'clothed in linen.' With this cf. Ezek. ix. 2.

pure and **bright.** These epithets, being in common use for the garments of angels, confirm the above judgement; see Acts x. 30; Matt. xvii. 2, xxviii. 3.

golden girdles. So in the vision of the Son of Man, i. 13.

7. living creatures: i. e. the cherubim; see on iv. 6.

golden bowls: broad shallow vessels, probably of a saucer shape, so that their contents could be poured out at once and suddenly. They represent the 'basins' of the temple furniture, and were used for presenting incense, and drink-offerings or libations. Here however they are filled, not with wine, but with 'the wine of the wrath of God' (cf. xvi. 19).

8. the temple was filled with smoke. From Isa. vi. 4. Smoke, like 'cloud,' is a symbol of the presence of the Divine glory and majesty; see Exod. xl. 34, 35; 1 Kings viii. 11; Ezek. x. 4. The presence of God, thus manifested for judgement, closed the temple against all access until these judgements were complete.

xvi. *The pouring of the Bowls.* The plagues which follow on the pouring of the Bowls are to be understood neither as a repetition of those following on the Trumpets, nor as a wholly independent series of judgements. They represent the woes and judgements which immediately precede the coming of Christ, in their horror and certainty, in the universality with which they affect all forms of life, and in their special application to the forms of iniquity and blasphemy which have been exposed to view in chaps. xii–xiv.

And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the 2
earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon
the men which had the mark of the beast, and which
worshipped his image.

And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; 3
and it became blood as of a dead man; and every
living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea.

And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and 4
the fountains of the waters; and it became blood. And 5
I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art
thou, which art and which wast, thou Holy One, because
thou didst thus judge: for they poured out the blood of 6

'No attempt to determine the special meaning of the objects thus visited by the wrath of God—the land, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, and the sun—has yet been, or is ever perhaps likely to be, successful; and the general effect alone appears to be important' (Milligan).

2. a noisome and grievous sore. So the sixth of the Egyptian Plagues (Exod. ix. 8-11) is 'a boil breaking forth with blains'; cf. Deut. xxviii. 27, 35.

xvi. 3. *The second Bowl.* As in the case of the Trumpets, the second and the third of this series affect respectively the sea, and the rivers, and springs. Here the effect in both cases is to turn the waters into blood, as in the first of the Egyptian Plagues (Exod. vii. 17-21).

3. every living soul: *lit.* 'every soul of life'; it is the animal life that is above referred to.

xvi. 4-7. *The third Bowl.*

5. the angel of the waters. Cf. vii. 1, xiv. 18; and *Enoch* xl. 16, 'the spirit of the seas.' This association of angels with cosmic or elemental forces is found in Rabbinic literature; see Weber's *Jüdische Theologie*, p. 172 f.

which art and which wast. The construction is ungrammatical here as in i. 4; there is no authority for the addition of 'and shalt be' in this passage.

thou Holy One: the word is the same as in xv. 4.

6. they poured out the blood, &c. Cf. Ps. lxxix. 3, 'Their blood have they shed like water.' The 'saints' are the Christians in general; the 'prophets,' that class among the Christians in

saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to
7 drink: they are worthy. And I heard the altar saying,
Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are
thy judgements.

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun;
9 and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. And
men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed
the name of the God which hath the power over these
plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne
of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they

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which the writer reckoned himself. For the form of the judgement cf. Isa. xlix. 26.

they are worthy. Contrast iii. 4.

7. the altar. The altar on which are the prayers of the saints (viii. 3), and under which are the souls of the martyrs (vi. 9), is personified as speaking in their name.

true and righteous, &c. So in xix. 2; cf. John v. 30, vii. 24.

xvi. 8, 9. *The fourth Bowl.*

8. upon the sun. Like the fourth Trumpet, the fourth Bowl affects the sun only, with a different result. Observe also that whereas the effects of the Trumpets (verses 1–4) are limited to a third part of the object, here the pouring of the Bowls affects the whole.

9. repented not. So neither did 'the rest of the men which were not killed' by the plagues following the sixth Trumpet (ix. 20); contrast, however, xi. 13.

The first four Bowls form a group by themselves, as do the first four Seals and Trumpets, the judgements which follow them being general in their character. The remaining three in this series also have special reference to definite enemies of the church and of God.

xvi. 10, 11. *The fifth Bowl.*

10. the throne of the beast. 'By "the throne of the beast," Rome, the seat of Cæsarism, is evidently intended; this plague therefore strikes the seat of the enemy of God itself' (Bousset).

his kingdom (those lands which owned his sway) **was darkened:** better, 'overwhelmed with darkness.' Cf. the fifth

gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the 11
God of heaven because of their pains and their sores;
and they repented not of their works.

And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great 12
river, the *river* Euphrates; and the water thereof was
dried up, that the way might be made ready for the
kings that *come* from the sunrising. And I saw *coming* 13
out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth
of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,
three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: for they are spirits 14

Trumpet (ix. 1, 2), and the ninth Egyptian Plague (Exod. x. 21-23).

11. their pains and their sores: due to the first and subsequent Bowls, not to the darkness. The judgements 'are cumulative, not simply successive.'

xvi. 12-16. *The sixth Bowl.*

12. the river **Euphrates.** The sounding of the sixth Trumpet (ix. 13 ff.) also sets in motion armed forces at or beyond the Euphrates. Here, by the drying up of the same river, the way is made open for **the kings that** come **from the sunrising.** The prediction is still concerned with the Roman empire, and is shaped by an anticipation of what is to follow in chap. xvii (verses 11-18). The kings, in all probability, stand for those Parthian rulers in alliance with whom Nero was to return from the East to destroy Rome, and challenge the forces of God to a final conflict. See below on xvii. 12.

13. I saw coming **out of the mouth of the dragon,** &c. Observe, as indicative of the plasticity of the apocalyptic method, that the presence of 'the beast' and of 'the false prophet' upon the scene is inferred in continuance from chap. xiii, while it is only here for the first time that the writer refers to the dragon as '*seen*' by himself.

the false prophet: i. e. the second Monster of xiii. 11 f., where see note; cf. xix. 20, xx. 10.

unclean spirits. The parallel to these is probably to be found not in the gospels, where the emphasis is on the character of the spirits as unclean, but in 1 Tim. iv. 1 ('seducing spirits'), and 1 John iv. 3 ('the spirit of Antichrist'). These figures represent the spiritual influence of the three forces, or their power to inspire others to evil.

as it were frogs. 'In the entire absence of Scripture symbolism—for the only mention of frogs besides this is in, or

of devils, working signs; which go forth unto the kings
of the whole world, to gather them together unto the
15 war of the great day of God, the Almighty. (Behold,
I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and
keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see
16 his shame.) And they gathered them together into the
place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

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in regard to, the relation of the plague in Egypt—we can only explain the similitude from the uncleanness, and the pertinacious noise, of the frog' (Alford).

14. they are spirits of devils (Gr. 'demons'). Holtzmann and others would render, 'there are spirits,' &c.; but the remark would be curiously otiose at this point.

the kings of the whole world. These are not identical with, though they include, the kings 'from the sunrising' (verse 12). This is probably another case where the writer has first adopted a trait from traditional eschatology, and then expanded it to be universal.

the great day of God. Cf. vi. 17, 'the great day of their wrath,' and note.

15. The speaker is the one who spoke to John at the first, i. 17 ff., and the thought is an expansion of iii. 3.

as a thief. Cf. iii. 3; 1 Thess. v. 2, 4; 2 Pet. iii. 10; and especially Matt. xxiv. 38–44.

Blessed. Cf. Matt. xxiv. 46, 'Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.'

keepeth his garments, &c.: cf. iii. 18, vii. 14. The thought is that the watcher is ready against the most sudden summons; it is not likely that any spiritual interpretation of the 'garments' is immediately intended.

16. The previous verse being in effect a parenthesis (so in the R. V.), this one takes up the close of verse 14.

the place which is called . . . Har-Magedon. The precision of the phrase introducing the name suggests that the writer had an actual locality in view; and it has been generally understood that he refers to the Plain of Esdraelon, at one end of which stood Megiddo (see G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, chap. xix). This was 'the classic battleground of Scripture,' and, in particular, the scene of the great victory over Sisera, celebrated in the Song of Deborah (Judges v). It has been felt as a difficulty by some that the name means *Hill* of Megiddo, whereas it was the 'plain,' on the edge of which it lay, which was the immemorial battleground. But, as Nestle has pointed out

And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; 17
and there came forth a great voice out of the temple,
from the throne, saying, It is done: and there were 18
lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was
a great earthquake, such as was not since there were
men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty.
And the great city was divided into three parts, and the 19
cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was
remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the
cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And 20

(Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, sub voc.), 'in the very context of Judges v "Mount Tabor" and "the high places of the field" are mentioned.' The choice of this title for the plain may arise from a reminiscence of the words in Isa. xiv. 13, put into the mouth of the king of Babylon ('I will sit upon the mount of congregation—*har-mô'ed*—in the uttermost parts of the north'). Whatever be the historical ground of the name, it is to this spot that 'the kings of the whole world' are to be gathered together for the final struggle with the armies of God. See xix. 19.

in Hebrew. Cf. ix. 11 (note), xx. 16.

xvi. 17-21. *The seventh Bowl.*

17. a great voice: the voice of God, as in verse 1.

out of the temple, from the throne. The heavenly throne and the heavenly temple, which alternate with one another as the background of the visions (cf. iv and viii), are here combined.

It is done: so in xxi. 6. The declaration refers both to the close of the cycle of the Bowls, and to the fact that these complete the preparation for the judgement.

18. lightnings, and voices, and thunders: as in viii. 5 and xi. 19 (close of the Trumpets).

earthquake: as in vi. 12, after the sixth Seal, viii. 5, after the casting of fire on the earth, and xi. 19, after the seventh Trumpet; here, however, it is described with special emphasis and detail.

19. the great city. Cf. xi. 8, but here it is Rome that is meant, as appears below.

and Babylon the great: Rome, as in xiv. 8.

was remembered, &c. (cf. Acts x. 31). Her fall has already been heralded in xiv. 8, and is to be described in chap. xvii; here it is announced and traced to its source.

the cup of the wine. See xiv. 10, and note.

every island fled away, and the mountains were not
21 found. And great hail, *every stone* about the weight of
a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and
men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail;
for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

17 And there came one of the seven angels that had the
seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I
will shew thee the judgement of the great harlot that
2 sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the
earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the

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20. every island, &c. See vi. 14, xx. 11.

21. great hail. Here the seventh Bowl comes into parallelism with the seventh Trumpet (xi. 19) and with the seventh of the Egyptian Plagues (Exod. ix. 18–26).

men blasphemed God, &c.: so in xvi. 9, 11. The effect even of this judgement is still only to harden the hearts of the determined worshippers of the Beast.

xvii. THE JUDGEMENT OF ROME UNDER THE FIGURE OF THE 'GREAT HARLOT.'

That which has been predicted in a compendious and anticipative way in xiv. 8, xvi. 19, is now to be described in detail.

xvii. 1–6. *The vision of the harlot upon the Beast.*

1. the judgement of the great harlot. In verse 5 we learn that her name is a mystery, is 'Babylon,' and in verse 9 that she 'sitteth upon seven mountains'; and it is generally admitted that she represents Rome, the centre of the world's hostility against the church, as Babylon had been the centre and representative of its enmity against the Jews. The comparison is found already in 1 Pet. v. 13 (probably), and subsequently in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (lxvii. 7) and in the *Sibylline Oracles.*

It is no objection to this identification of Rome with Babylon that this woman is described as one **that sitteth upon many waters.** This feature, with those of the next verse, belongs to the O.T. description of the city (whether Babylon or Tyre or Nineveh) which stood for the personification of iniquity. Thus Jer. li. 13, 'O thou [Babylon] that dwellest upon many waters, . . . thine end is come.' See below, verse 15.

2. with whom the kings of the earth, &c. In Isa. xxiii. 17 it is said of Tyre, she 'shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms

earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. And he carried me away in the Spirit into a 3
wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven
heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in 4
purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication,

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of the world'; and in Nahum iii. 4 Nineveh is described as 'the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms.' It would be quite out of place to find here any allusion to the corruptions or unfaithfulness of the church, based upon the well-known language of Hosea and parallels: like all the figures of this book, the 'Scarlet Woman' has had more than one historical antitype; but what the writer had in view was not papal but pagan Rome.

drunken with the wine, &c.: cf. xiv. 8. The image is from Jer. li. 7, 'Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken.'

3. in the Spirit: so at i. 10, and iv. 1. In each case the writer connects with a special condition of ecstasy his perception of a vision of particular impressiveness.

into a wilderness. The best explanation of this curious setting for a vision of Rome or Babylon is found on a comparison with Isa. xxi. The prophet's oracle upon Babylon, which was plainly before the mind of John, bears the curious title, 'Burden of the desert of the sea,' but in the LXX version 'the vision of the wilderness,' and in the first verse the same word 'wilderness' is repeated three times; it was in 'a wilderness' therefore that this N. T. prophet sees his vision of the Babylon of his day.

upon a scarlet-coloured beast. The 'beast' is, as in xiii. 1–10, the political power of Rome, particularly as incarnate in Cæsar-worship; its 'scarlet' (= 'purple') colouring indicates not cruelty and blood (vi. 4), but the luxury and pomp of the imperial city; the 'names of blasphemy' (xiii. 1) recall the imperial titles, 'Divine Augustus,' &c., not only borne by the emperors, but recorded a thousand times on temples, statues, coins, and so forth, so that the empire was 'full' of them.

having seven heads and ten horns: interpreted below, verses 9, 12.

4. Further description of the luxury and splendour of Rome.

a golden cup. Cf. Jer. li. 7.

5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE
6 ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered
7 with a great wonder. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her,
8 which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to

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5. upon her forehead: i. e. possibly, upon the head-dress. The commentators quote from Seneca: 'Stetisti puella in lupanari: nomen tuum pependit a fronte; pretia stupri accepisti'; cf. Juv. *Sat.* vi. 123.

mystery: see i. 20, note. The word, whether it be part of the inscription or not, calls attention to the metaphorical character of the title which follows.

and of the abominations of the earth. All the iniquities of the known world flowed towards Rome as to a *sentina gentium*, and with the descriptions of Tacitus and Juvenal before us, it is not difficult to understand the propriety even of this invective: cf. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44: 'Rome, where all kinds of enormity and filthy shame meet together and become fashionable.'

6. drunken with the blood of the saints. The reference is to the wild orgies of persecution, especially of that Neronian persecution described by Tacitus, as above: 'A vast multitude was convicted not so much of arson as of hatred of the human race. And they were not only put to death, but put to death with insult, in that they were either dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish by the worrying of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and, when the daylight failed, to be burnt as lights by night.' There is nothing in the known history of Jerusalem to justify such a phrase as a description of that city. No distinction can be drawn between 'the saints' and 'the martyrs (*lit.* 'witnesses') of Jesus'; the same people are indicated under two aspects.

I wondered with a great wonder. Cf. Jer. l. 13, li. 37, 41. The Seer is astonished at the iniquity, as the prophet at the fall, of 'Babylon.'

xvii. 7–18. *The interpretation of the 'mystery.'*

8. The beast . . . was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss. The vision which is based on an intensely

come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come. Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads 9
are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and 10
they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the

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vivid realization of Rome in its actual condition, is interpreted as predicting a situation which has not yet arisen, but must shortly come to pass. The Beast, which in the vision was a general figure for the imperial power, is interpreted of one personality in whom that power had once lodged and through whom it should again be exercised; and there is little reason to doubt that the form which the prediction takes is moulded by the expectation of a return of Nero to life and power. In fact, the 'wounded head' of xiii. 3 here appears as the Beast himself. On the whole subject see Introduction, p. 56 ff.

out of the abyss. So xi. 7, and note at ix. 1.

perdition. The fulfilment of the prediction is described at xix. 20. The word is the same as that used by our Lord in Matt. vii. 13, 'Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction'; and the translators both of the A. V. and R. V. vary the rendering between 'perdition' and 'destruction' for no very clear reason. See Massie's article on the word in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

whose name, &c. Cf. xiii. 8, and note.

9. Here is the mind which hath wisdom. An expression of the phrase in xiii. 18, q.v.: the meaning of these things is plain not to all, but to the truly wise.

seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. The reference to Rome, the 'city of seven hills,' is unmistakable. Allusions to these are common in classical writers (e.g. Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 782; Horace, *Car. Sec.* 7; Martial, iv. 64).

10. and they are seven kings. It is best to recognize a double interpretation here: the woman-city is planted upon seven hills, but also sustained by seven kings, which are represented by seven heads of the imperial monster.

the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come. Plainly the writer represents himself as living in the reign of the sixth, *scil.* of the sixth Roman emperor; and it might be thought a simple matter to ascertain in this way the date of the composition of the book or, at least, of this passage. But again different results are arrived at, according as we begin with Cæsar or Augustus, and

other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must
11 continue a little while. And the beast that was, and is
not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and
12 he goeth into perdition. And the ten horns that thou
sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as
yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast,
13 for one hour. These have one mind, and they give
14 their power and authority unto the beast. These shall
war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome

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according as we reckon or omit the questionable reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The most probable theory sees in the five, who 'have fallen,' Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; in the one who 'is,' Vespasian (A. D. 69-79), and in the one who 'is not yet come,' who is to continue only 'a little while,' Titus. It is hardly possible that Galba, whose reign only lasted eight months, could be recognized in the Province of Asia as 'he that is.' On the bearing of the passage upon the date of the book see the Introduction, p. 53.

11. Observe, as characteristic of the way in which apocalyptic figures dissolve into one another, that the 'beast' and 'the eighth' of his own heads are plainly identified together. If the seventh is Titus, it is after the close of his reign that the return of Nero, who had been one 'of the seven,' is looked for; or, if the book including this passage were of later date, then the Apostle recognizes in Domitian a replica of Nero, and in that sense a fulfilment of the expectation of Nero's return. For this there is quite sufficient ground, both in the character of Domitian and in his treatment of the Christians (cf. Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. vii; and Juvenal, iv. 38).

12. the ten horns. The same image as in chap. xiii, but with a different interpretation. The horns are now 'ten kings which have received no kingdoms as yet,' but are to share the brief authority of the 'beast.' They cannot, therefore, find their antitypes in any of the Roman emperors, but most probably represent the Parthian rulers, the independent 'satraps,' at whose head Nero was to return, the 'kings from the sunrising' of xvi. 12. Their power, like that of the Beast, is to be for **one hour**, i. e. of the briefest duration, because 'the time is short,' and the end close at hand.

14. Whatever forms the writer expects these forces to take on the plane of history, he sees them also as independent of all form —the forces of spiritual evil arrayed against the Lamb, the representative of Divine grace and righteousness. Behind every

them, for he is Lord of lords, and Kinclean and hateful
they *also shall overcome* that are with her fornication 3
chosen and faithful. And he saith unto mof the earth
which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, archants of
and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. Anness.
horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shaCome 4
the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, hip
shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fir 5

---

conflict in time there is the conflict that has been waged in heaven, waged and won by the Lamb; and the victory which awaits the church in the struggle with the Beast is part of, and rests upon, the eternal victory in heaven.

Lord of lords, and King of kings: cf. xix. 16. The title 'God of gods, and Lord of lords' is given to the Most High in Deut. x. 17; cf. also Dan. ii. 47; Ps. cxxxvi. 3.

and they also shall overcome: so the R.V., supplying the verb from the first part of the verse. Christ's victory is theirs, who are not only called and chosen, but faithful to their heavenly calling; cf. 1 John v. 4.

15. That feature in the picture of Babylon-Rome (verse 1) which belongs to the natural Babylon is now interpreted; the **waters,** whereon she sits, are to be understood of the many nations over which Rome holds sway; cf. verse 18 below.

16. the ten horns, &c.: see above, verse 10. Allusion is here made to that part of the expectation concerning Nero which represented him as about to return in bitter hatred and indignation against the imperial city, where his own subjects had risen against him and (actually or apparently) done him to death. The destruction of the Harlot-city is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of the forces of evil themselves; by 'the wicked which is thy sword' (Ps. xvii. 13, marg.).

shall make her desolate and naked: strip her of the pomp described in verse 4. 'Her former lovers shall no longer frequent her, nor answer to her call: her rich adornments shall be stripped off. She shall lose, at the hands of those whom she formerly seduced with her cup of fornication, both her spiritual power over them, and her temporal power to adorn herself.' So Alford, who takes the Harlot to represent not pagan, but papal Rome. That we find an earlier application of the prophecy does not preclude our seeing other and later fulfilments of it. What is here 'unveiled' is the principle of Divine judgement and the certainty of Divine victory.

shall eat . . . shall burn. The one applies to the figure of the Woman, the other to the city she represents.

17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished.
18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was
2 lightened with his glory. And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of devils, and a hold of every

---

17. For God did put in their hearts, &c. This also 'cometh from the Lord'; the policy even of those who are His enemies is governed by His will. Even in this book, where the struggle between good and evil is revealed as a 'war in heaven,' there is no trace of dualism. God is all in all, and worketh all things, even the machinations of evil, 'according to the purpose of His will.'

until the words of God should be accomplished: cf. x. 7. The 'words' are prophetic oracles, probably those in the context referring to the destruction of the city.

18. which reigneth over the kings of the earth. This can refer only to Rome—by no stretch of imagination to Jerusalem, or to the corrupted Christian church. Alford quotes: 'Septem urbs alta iugis toto quae praesidet orbi.'

xviii—xix. 10. THE JUDGEMENT OF BABYLON-ROME, WITH THE LAMENTATIONS AND THE THANKSGIVINGS OVER HER FALL.

xviii. 1-3. *Announcement of her fall.* The fall, which has been announced predictively in xiv. 8 and chap. xvii, is now described as accomplished, and its issues variously celebrated.

1. another angel. It is neither necessary nor important to ascertain with whom this angel is contrasted; it is the angel to whom this function is committed; cf. xiv. 6.

authority. Cf. xiii. 2 (of the beast); vi. 8 note.

was lightened with his glory. From Ezek. xliii. 2, 'The earth shined with his glory.'

2. Fallen, fallen. From Isa. xxi. 9; cf. xiv. 8.

a habitation of devils: or 'demons.' A similar fate is predicted of Babylon in Isa. xiii. 21, and of Edom in Isa. xxxiv. 13-15; only the figures which there verge towards the ghostly or supernatural here become plainly so. See articles 'Demon,' and 'Lilith' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful
bird. For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication 3
all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth
committed fornication with her, and the merchants of
the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come 4
forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship
with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for 5
her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath
remembered her iniquities. Render unto her even as 6

---

a hold. The same word is used in 1 Pet. iii. 19, 'the spirits in prison.'

3. all the nations, &c. So already in xiv. 8.

the kings of the earth, &c. So xvii. 2.

the merchants of the earth waxed rich. See Ezekiel's description of the commerce and luxury of Tyre (xxvii. 9–27), and below, verse 11.

wantonness: marg. 'luxury.' In 1 Tim. v. 11 we have a verb compounded from this substantive; 'when they have waxed wanton,' see below, in verse 7.

xviii. 4–8. *Summons to God's people to come out from the doomed city.*

4. another voice: probably the voice of another angel.

Come forth, my people, out of her. From Jer. li. 45, 'My people, go ye out of the midst of her.' Cf. also Jer. l. 8, li. 6; and our Lord's command in Matt. xxiv. 16. The fear 'in the case of God's servants remaining in her, would be twofold: (1) Lest by over-persuasion or guilty conformity they should become accomplices in any of her crimes; (2) lest by being in and of her, they should, though the former may not have been the case, share in her punishment' (Alford).

5. have reached: the word (*lit.* 'have been fastened together') seems to mean 'have accumulated into a heap so high as to reach.' Cf. Jer. li. 9.

6. Render unto her, &c. This command is given not to the people of God, but to those appointed to execute the judgement, either to angelic ministers of wrath, or possibly to the Beast and his allies.

even as she rendered. The R. V. omits 'you.' The same comparison is found in Ps. cxxxvii. 8: cf. also the 'word concerning Babylon' in Jer. l. 15, 29.

she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle
7 unto her double. How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning.
8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God which judged her.
9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning,

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double unto her. Cf. Jer. xvi. 18 (of Jerusalem), 'I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double.' There is a striking contrast with the gracious promise of Isa. xl. 2.

in the cup, &c. Cf. xiv. 8, xvii. 4; the iniquities with which she filled her cup are now turned into 'the wine of the wrath of God.'

7. There is still a balancing between her conduct and her fate, as is brought out in the R.V.; the transition from the height of luxury to the depth of degradation is illustrated in Isa. iii. 16-26.

for she saith in her heart, &c. Cf. Isa. xlvii. 5, 7, and especially 8, 'Thou [Babylon] . . . that sayest in thine heart, I am, and there is none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.'

8. Isaiah's prophecy upon Babylon is still the groundwork of this prediction: xlvii. 9, 'These two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood.'

utterly burned with fire. Repeated from xvii. 16.

strong is the Lord God. Cf. Jer. l. 34.

xviii. 9-19. *Lamentation of those who were 'partakers of her sins.'* As the preceding section is largely coloured by reminiscences of Isaiah, so this depends closely on Ezekiel's description of the judgement of Tyre (chaps. xxvi, xxvii).

9. The order of the words emphasizes first the lamentation; = 'there shall be weeping and lamentation over her by the kings,' &c.

the kings of the earth, &c. See xvii. 2, xviii. 3.

the smoke of her burning. So in verse 18; there is doubt-

standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, 10
woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one
hour is thy judgement come. And the merchants of the 11
earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their
merchandise any more; merchandise of gold, and silver, 12
and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple,
and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel
of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood,
and of brass, and iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and 13
spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense,
and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle,
and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and
slaves; and souls of men. And the fruits which thy 14

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less an allusion to the destruction of Sodom, when 'the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace' (Gen. xix. 28).

11. After the kings, **the merchants.** Cf. Ezek. xxvii. 36. The difficulty felt by some that Rome has never been a great commercial city rests, partly, upon a very artificial distinction between Rome and its harbour and emporium at Ostia, and, partly, on a prosaic literalness of interpretation quite out of place in a passage of marked poetic character, and indeed in this book altogether.

merchandise: *lit.* 'cargo,' 'lading.'

12. thyine wood: i. e. all kinds of scented wood, whether for burning or for furnishing, e. g. citron, cedar, and sandal wood.

13. spice: rather, 'unguent.' Martial wishes for his friend that his hair 'may be ever glossy with Assyrian unguent.' We have here, in fact, a catalogue of the 'Persian gear' which Horace affected to despise.

chariots: a rare word, said to be of Gallic origin, for a carriage with four wheels. This item finds no parallel in Ezekiel, neither do those which follow.

slaves. The word means literally 'bodies,' then 'persons,' and then (in LXX and subsequently) 'slaves.' See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 160. Wetstein suggests 'gladiators.'

souls of men: marg. 'lives.' But it is possible to read a too modern meaning into either phrase. It is a rendering of the phrase in Ezek. xxvii. 13, 'They traded the persons of men'; cf. Gen. xxxvi. 6, 'All the souls of his house.' The construction

soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that
were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and
15 *men* shall find them no more at all. The merchants of
these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar
off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning;
16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in
fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold
17 and precious stone and pearl! for in one hour so great
riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and
every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as
18 many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried
out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying,
19 What *city* is like the great city? And they cast dust on
their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying,
Woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that
had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!

---

marks a distinction between the 'horses and chariots and slaves' and what comes before and after. Possibly we should see here additional items which distinguish Rome from her O. T. representative, Tyre.

14. The description passes over into direct address, probably by the writer himself, who, like Ezekiel, 'takes up a lamentation' on the city.

the fruits which thy soul lusted after: *lit.* 'the harvest of the desire of thy soul.'

15. The merchants. They, too, like the kings (verse 10), 'stand afar off' and lament.

16. arrayed, &c. See xvii. 4.

17. every shipmaster, &c. See Ezek. xxvii. 27-30. There is the same attempt here to enumerate all classes of those who 'occupy their business in great waters.'

18. What city **is like the great city?** So in Ezek. xxvii. 32, 'Who is there like Tyre?'

19. The description is from the same passage, Ezek. xxvii. 30. It is difficult to doubt, after examining this description, that the Apostle had a real city in view; whatever spiritual application we may give to it is not the primary, but a secondary interpretation.

for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, 20
thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye
prophets; for God hath judged your judgement on her.
And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great 21
millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a
mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down,
and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of 22
harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters
shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman,
of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in
thee; and the voice of a millstone shall be heard no
more at all in thee; and the light of a lamp shall shine 23
no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom
and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee:
for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for
with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived. And in 24

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xviii. 20-24. *Rejoicing in heaven as a counterpart to the lamentation on earth.*

20. thou heaven. The thought is found in Jer. li. 48, 'Then the heaven and the earth . . . shall sing for joy over Babylon'; the form has parallels in Deut. xxxii. 43; Isa. xliv. 23.

God hath judged your judgement. The judgement upon Babylon was judgement in favour of the believers in Christ, an answer to the prayer of the martyr-souls below the altar (vi. 9), and indeed to the prayers of God's people at all times in face of wickedness and persecution (Ps. xliii. 1).

21. a stone as it were a great millstone. See Jer. li. 63, 64, where the prediction of Babylon's fall follows similarly upon the description of its details.

22. Cf. Ezek. xxvi. 13 [of Tyre], 'I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard'; also Isa. xiv. 11: **the voice of a millstone;** so in Jer. xxv. 10, 'I will take from them . . . the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.'

23. the voice of the bridegroom, &c. See Jeremiah as above, and also vii. 34, xvi. 9, xxxiii. 11.

princes. See vi. 15.

thy sorcery. Sorcery and enchantments are laid to the charge of Babylon in Isa. xlvii. 12; cf. also Nahum iii. 4.

her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

19 After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salva-
2 tion, and glory, and power, belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgements; for he hath judged

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24. in her was found the blood, &c. Cf. Ezek. xxiv. 6, 'Woe to the bloody city [Babylon] . . . For her blood is in the midst of her'; Jer. li. 35. But the sin of the new Babylon is yet wider and deeper; she is 'drunken with the blood' of the saints.

all that have been slain upon the earth. Cf. Jer. li. 49. Either the language is that of hyperbole, or the representative city of wickedness becomes a figure for all the 'habitation of cruelty,' and is made responsible for all the blood that has been unrighteously shed.

xix. 1-9. *The praises of heaven for the judgement of the Woman, leading to its heavenly counterpart, the marriage of the Lamb.* The writer pursues the method with which we are already familiar, setting over against the dark picture of the last two chapters one of brightness and heavenly glory. The praises of the heavenly host are heard again, which have already marked the readiness of the Lamb to open the book (v. 9 ff.), the appearance of the 'great multitude' (vii. 16 ff.), the sounding of the seventh Trumpet (xi. 15 ff.), the beginning of the Bowls (xv. 3), and the pouring of the third Bowl (xvi. 5 ff.).

Bousset points out that those who find different documents in the book have not succeeded in coming to any agreement or established result in their criticism of these verses, which he claims without hesitation for the author himself. The writer here shews plainly his method. His material is collected from many various directions, but he weaves it into a homogeneous whole.

1. a great multitude in heaven. Cf. verse 6, and vii. 9.

Hallelujah. The word occurs only here and in verses 4 and 6 in the N. T. It is common in the psalms, where however it is translated (A. V. and R. V.) 'Praise ye the Lord'; e. g. the closing verses of Pss. civ, cv, cvi.

Salvation. This and the following substantives have the article, as in vii. 12 and elsewhere. It is the salvation which men look for, the positive blessedness which comes from, because it belongs to, God.

2. true and righteous are his judgements. So xv. 3, xvi. 7.

the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants
at her hand. And a second time they say, Hallelujah. 3
And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. And the 4
four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne,
saying, Amen; Hallelujah. And a voice came forth 5
from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great.
And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, 6
and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our
God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be 7
exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath

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hath avenged, &c.: *lit.* 'hath exacted in vengeance the blood.' Cf. 2 Kings ix. 7; Deut. xxxii. 43.

3. her smoke. Cf. xviii. 9, xiv. 11; Isa. xxxiv. 10.

4. the four and twenty elders, &c. Cf. iv. 11, v. 8, 14, xi. 16.

5. The voice comes not 'out of,' but from the direction of, **the throne.** There is nothing to indicate who is the speaker, but the words are not likely to be spoken by the Lord.

Give praise to our God, &c.: the phrases are familiar in the Psalms, e. g. cxiii. 1, cxxxiv. 1, cxxxv. 20.

6. The same imagery is found already in i. 15, xiv. 2, vi. 1, xiv. 2.

the Almighty. See i. 8, xi. 17.

7. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad. The same two words are combined in Matt. v. 12.

the marriage of the Lamb. The writer here introduces, in a characteristic way, a thought which is to be treated with greater elaboration later on. These words 'introduce to us transitionally a new series of visions respecting the final consummation of the vision between Christ and his church, which brings about the end (xxi. 1 ff.). This series, properly speaking, includes in itself the overthrow of the kings of the earth, the binding of Satan, the thousand years' reign, the loosing of Satan, the final overthrow of the enemy, and the general judgement: but is not consummated except in the entire union of Christ and his church with which the book concludes.'

his wife: the bride of the Messiah is the New Jerusalem.

8 made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she
should array herself in fine linen, bright *and* pure: for
9 the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And
he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are
bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he
10 saith unto me, These are true words of God. And I

The figure, of course, has its foundation in the O. T. representation of Jehovah as 'married' to His people; see Hos. ii. 19; Isa. liv. 1-8; Ezek. xvi. 7. In 4 Ezra ix Sion appears as the bride of God; in more than one of our Lord's parables the kingdom of heaven is set forth under the figure of a marriage feast; and in the Epistle to the Ephesians (v. 23 ff.) Paul presses home the meaning of the same figure. Here it provides the climax of the imagery of this book. 'The Lamb is come to claim his bride, and his wife hath made herself ready. She has been long betrothed, and has been waiting for the bridegroom. Through storm and calm, through sorrow and joy, through darkness and light, she has waited for him, crying ever and again, "Come quickly!" At last he comes, and the marriage and the marriage supper are to take place' (Milligan).

8. bright and **pure.** There is an obvious contrast with the description of the Woman at the beginning of chap. xviii.

is. Observe the use of this word for 'represents'; cf. Gal. iv. 25; Matt. xxvi. 26.

the righteous acts: so Grimm, Bousset, Milligan, and Holtzmann who compares Rom. v. 18, and sees an antithesis to 'her sins' (='unrighteous acts') in xviii. 5. Alford, translating 'righteousness,' understands their pure and holy state attained by their having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

9. he saith unto me. Again we cannot say who speaks, but evidently it is an angel, and possibly the one mentioned in xvii. 1.

they which are bidden: cf. Matt. xxii. 3; Luke xiv. 8 ff. The bride is of course, from one point of view, the sum of the guests who are bidden, 'the called, chosen, and faithful' of xvii. 14.

These are true words of God. Many good authorities omit 'of God,' which may be an early gloss. See xxi. 5.

This verse and the following one sound like a conclusion of the writer's work, and by some critics have been taken to mark the end of one of the documents of which they believe the book to be composed. But we have already seen in xiv. 12, 13 a passage where the work seems similarly to sink to rest; here fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

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also the section is followed by a new opening of the future, and a further upward sweep towards the end.

xix. 10. *The Apostle withheld from worshipping the angel.* See also xxii. 8, 9.

10. I fell down before his feet. The action is due not to what immediately precedes, nor to any conscious intention of the Seer to offer to the angel worship that is due to God only, but to the overwhelming impression of the whole foregoing vision. This natural impulse is checked, however, by the angel reminding John that he is but a 'minister of God to do His pleasure,' like the prophets and saints themselves. It has been supposed by some that we have in this incident (which is repeated at xxii. 8) a protest against the incipient worship of angels which was creeping into the church; cf. Col. ii. 18, with Abbott's note there. Traces of the same protest may also be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

with thy brethren: in xxii. 9 these are further defined as 'the prophets.'

that hold the testimony of Jesus. It is difficult to decide whether this is to be understood *objectively* = the testimony they bear to Jesus, or *subjectively* = the testimony borne by Jesus. The latter is probably to be preferred; the 'testimony of Jesus' is the sum of the revelation made by him; this is the 'fair deposit' which Timothy was to guard (2 Tim. i. 14), and the holding of which is so often in this book the sign-manual of the saints; cf. i. 2, 9, vi. 9, xii. 17.

worship God. Cf. Matt. iv. 10; Deut. vi. 13.

the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. This difficult phrase is much more easily interpreted on the understanding of the first words given above; the 'spirit of prophecy' is not the organ of unregulated fantasy, but related to, and governed by, the truth which is in Jesus; the latter is the norm and the criterion of the former.

xix. 11—xxii. 5. THE CULMINATION AND THE FINAL CRISIS OF JUDGEMENT AND REDEMPTION.

This is the closing section of the book, in which all the foregoing anticipative predictions are gathered up and repeated in a presentation of the end of this present world, with the final

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white
horse, and he that sat thereon, called Faithful and True;
12 and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And
his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many
diadems; and he hath a name written, which no one
13 knoweth but he himself. And he *is* arrayed in a garment
sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word

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destruction of wickedness, and the establishment of the redeemed society of God. It falls into five sections, of which the first is—

xix. 11–21. *The victory of Christ and his angels over the Beast and the kings of the earth.*

11. I saw the heaven opened, &c.: cf. vi. 2. Here the figure can be that of Christ and Christ alone.

Faithful and True. Cf. i. 5, iii. 7, 14.

in righteousness. Cf. Isa. xi. 4, 'With righteousness shall he judge the poor,' &c.

12. are **a flame of fire** (i. 14), **and upon his head** are **many diadems.** If there is any distinction to be drawn between the words, the 'diadem' signifies inherent royalty and authority, whilst the 'crown' is bestowed (vi. 2) as a symbol of expected or achieved victory.

a name written, which no one knoweth but he himself: cf. ii. 17, iii. 12. The first passage illustrates the importance and significance of the 'name,' the second its belonging to Christ. This name, therefore, is not that to be mentioned in the next verse, but another, a 'name of power,' which is indeed 'not known.' Cf. Acts iv. 7, 12; Phil. ii. 9, 10.

13. sprinkled with: for A. V. 'dipped in.' But there is very good MS. authority for the latter; both forms of the idea are found in Isa. lxiii. 1, 3, from which it is clear that the primary reference is to the blood of his enemies; that does not, however, exclude the possibility of a reference to the fact that this conqueror overcomes by the shedding of his own blood.

his name is called The Word of God. The 'Word' is the specifically Johannine description of Him that was 'from the beginning,' used in reference to a person only here and in John i. 1 ff. This passage therefore forms a notable link between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel. 'In Philo "Logos" is the name directly given to God, but in John i. 1–18 this "Logos" had become the transcendental name of Christ. This passage seems therefore to be connected with the Johannine Logos-doctrine, were it only in the form of a mysterious indication of the

of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed 14
him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white *and*
pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, 15
that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall
rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-
press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.
And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name 16
written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried 17

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watchword of the new theology. In any case it contains the idea of pre-existence' (*Vorweltlichkeit*). So Holtzmann, with whom Beyschlag, Weizsäcker, and Bousset agree.

14. the armies which are in heaven. Though the saints may be included as spectators and partakers of the victory (xvii. 14), the warring host is the angelic host of heaven.

white. The colour both of the horses and of the garments is the symbol of victory.

15. a sharp sword: see i. 16, ii. 12; and cf. especially Heb. iv. 12. In the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. 27, 39) 'it is particularly to be observed that the Messiah overthrows his enemies by the mere word of his mouth' (Schürer).

smite the nations: cf. Isa. xi. 4, 'He shall smite the earth with the rod (LXX, 'the word') of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked'; John xii. 48.

he shall rule them with a rod of iron: from Ps. ii. 9 (Messianic), as in ii. 27, xii. 5. 'He' in both clauses is emphatic, = 'he and no other.'

treadeth the winepress, &c.: from Isa. lxiii. 3; cf. xiv. 19, 20. Two ideas seem here to be in combination: the winepress of God's wrath, which is trodden, and the cup of God's wrath, which is mixed for the wicked; cf. xiv. 10, xvi. 19. The winepress trodden in judgement yields the cup of wrath which is mixed for the wicked.

16. on his garment and on his thigh: i. e. on his girdle.

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Cf. xvii. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 15. In the O. T. these are titles of the Most High. The closest parallel is in *Enoch*, ix. 4 (Sync.). 'And they said to the Lord of the ages, "Thou art the God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, and King of Kings."'

17. in the sun. 'Not only as the place of brightness and glory becoming the herald of so great a victory, but also as the central station in mid heaven for those to whom the call was to be made.'

with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the
18 great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against
20 him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them

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in mid heaven. Cf. viii. 13, xiv. 6.

Come and be gathered together. The whole passage is closely parallel to Ezek. xxxix. 17-20, 'Speak unto the birds of every sort, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice,' &c. There is once more a tragic contrast between this 'great supper' on the slain, and the 'marriage supper of the Lamb.'

18. kings . . . captains . . . mighty men . . . horses . . . all men. In Ezekiel, 'the mighty . . . princes . . . horses . . . mighty men . . . all men of war.' An instructive illustration of the way in which the Apostle uses his material.

free and bond, &c. See xiii. 16.

19. the beast: mentioned here for the first time since chap. xvii.

gathered together to make war. It is a heavenly host which has come forth to battle, but their foes are 'the beast' and 'the kings of the earth' (xvi. 14, xvii. 2, 18, xviii. 3); it is the final struggle of Armageddon, predicted in xvi. 16, that is here described.

20. the beast was taken: *lit.* 'laid hold of,' 'arrested.' The word is a favourite one with John, occurring eight times in the gospel (vii. 30, &c.), and otherwise thrice only in the N. T. (Acts and Colossians).

and with him the false prophet. The false prophet (xvi. 13) is the second 'beast' of xiii. 11 ff. (where see notes); probably it represents the organized priesthood of the Cæsar-worship, by whose imposture men were deceived, and by their persecution driven to worship the Beast.

that worshipped his image: they twain were cast alive
into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and 21
the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon
the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his
mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, 20
having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his
hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, 2

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the lake of fire. Cf. xx. 10, 14, 15, xxi. 8. These are the only passages in which the figure occurs in this form. Elsewhere in the N.T. it is Gehenna (= 'Ge-Hinnom'), the valley of 'unquenchable fire' (Mark ix. 43, R.V.), which is the doom of the wicked; cf. 'the Gehenna of fire' (Matt. xviii. 9, v. 22 marg.), Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5; the 'furnace of fire' (Matt. xiii. 42, 50). The physical basis of the figure is found in the valley of Hinnom, which had been the scene of abominable sacrifices, when Ahaz and Manasseh caused their children to pass through the fire 'to Moloch' (2 Kings xvi. 3, xxi. 6). These sacrifices were probably made on the 'high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom' (Jer. vii. 31, xxxii. 15). In Isa. xxx. 33 'Topheth' has already become a symbol of the burning judgement of God and the scene of its execution. On the whole subject see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. 'Gehenna,' and W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 377. It is memories of Topheth and the valley of Hinnom, as well as of Sodom, from which N. T. writers draw the imagery of Hell. The destruction of the Beast by fire is found in Dan. vii. 11, 'I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed; and he was given to be burned with fire.'

that burneth with brimstone. Cf. xiv. 10, and Isa. xxx. 33.

21. the rest: i. e. the kings of the earth, and their armies who have accepted the rule of the Beast.

with the sword. See verse 15.

xx. 1–3. *The victory over Satan and his binding.*

1. the key of the abyss: see ix. 1, note. The 'abyss' is not represented as the place of final punishment, which is the 'lake of fire'; cf. xvii. 8.

in his hand: *lit.* 'upon his hand'; hanging from it, as in v. 1.

2. the dragon, &c. So already in xii. 3, 9 (note), xiii. 2, 4, xvi. 13.

which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a
3 thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.
4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and

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for a thousand years. See below on verse 6.

3. he must be loosed: i. e. according to the determination of the Divine will.

xx. 4–6. *The millennial reign.*

4. I saw thrones: from Dan. vii. 9, 'I beheld till thrones were placed'; cf. Matt. xix. 28.

they sat upon them. Who? Some say 'the apostles,' as suggested by reference to Matthew above; others 'the saints,' comparing Dan. vii. 22, 'Judgement was given to the saints of the Most High'; and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. But though either of them is possible, there is no sufficient indication in the passage itself, and it is best to leave the description of these figures, as the Apostle leaves it, indefinite.

judgement was given unto them: i. e. authority to judge (cf. Dan. vii. 22). Their function being different from that of those who 'reign' with Christ, it is probable that they represent a different class.

I saw (supplied from the context) **the souls . . . beheaded.** This form of martyrdom is that which tradition ascribes to Paul. It would probably be the fate of those who were executed according to due form of law.

for the testimony of Jesus, &c.: i. e. 'because of, for the sake of, the revelation through Christ.' Cf. i. 9, and especially xii. 17 and xix. 10.

and such as worshipped not, &c. This describes another group, and as it is said of them also that they 'lived,' they too are to be reckoned of those who 'loved not their lives unto the death.' These had suffered martyrdom also rather than do homage to the Beast. Cf. xiii. 14–17.

they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

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they lived: i. e. 'lived again,' or, 'were made alive'; cf. ii. 8; Rom. xiv. 9; Gal. v. 25.

reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the only passage in the N. T. which clearly sets forth a doctrine of the Millennium, i. e. of a period in which 'Christ will reign in bodily presence upon earth for a thousand years.' Three elements in the expectation should be distinguished: (1) The personal reign of Christ on earth; (2) the duration of it, and (3) the persons who share in it.

(1) 'Outside of Revelation many interpreters find reference to a millennial kingdom in 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, when St. Paul seems to distinguish between the *parousia* of Christ with the resurrection of the saints, and the end when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father.' They identify the apparent interval with the period of Christ's reign in the text, and further adduce Phil. iii. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 14–17; Luke xiv. 14, &c. The problem of the connexion of these passages and their interpretation, with the further problem of the reconciliation between this view of an (apparent) double return of Christ to earth and the view supported by many other passages (Matt. xiii. 39, xxv. 31–46; John v. 28, vi. 44; Acts xvii. 31, &c.), cannot be discussed here. Reference should be made to Briggs, *The Messiah of the Apostles*, p. 341 ff., and to Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 437 ff., 520, 561. The problem must be studied, however, in the light of a true understanding of this passage, and especially of the period indicated, and the persons who are to reign.

(2) The duration of Messiah's kingdom (on earth) was a favourite subject of speculation among the Jews, and was very variously reckoned; e. g. three generations, forty years, seventy years, a hundred years, four hundred years (4 Ezra vii. 28–32), a thousand years, &c. The reckoning of a thousand years was based on a combination of Gen. i and Ps. xc. 4; six millenniums of work were to be followed by one of rest. Whether or not the figure in the text rests upon these Jewish speculations, it must fall under the general rule that all such figures in this book have a symbolical, not a numerical, value. 'The fundamental principle to be kept clearly and resolutely in view is this: that the *thousand years* mentioned in this passage express no period of time. They are not a figure for the whole Christian era, now extending to nearly nineteen hundred years. Nor do they denote a certain space of time, longer or shorter, it may be, than the definite number of years spoken of, at the close of the present dispensation, and to be, in the view of some preceded, in the view of others followed, by the Second Advent of our Lord. They embody an idea; and that idea, whether applied to the subjugation of Satan or to the

5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years
6 should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed
and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:

triumph of the saints, is the idea of completeness or perfection. Satan is bound for a thousand years; that is, he is completely bound. The saints reign for a thousand years; that is, they are introduced into a state of perfect and glorious victory' (Milligan).

(3) On the view taken above, it is the martyrs and the martyrs only who participate in this reign. It is held by many (e. g. Bousset, B. Weiss) that they also are included who, without having actually suffered martyrdom, have endured with constancy the presence and persecution of the Beast. But this involves giving a double meaning to 'they lived'; and in any case the emphasis is on the participation of the martyrs. A general resurrection and reign of 'the saints' can hardly be read into the passage.

On the whole subject see the articles on the 'Millennium' by Harnack in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and by W. A. Brown in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

5. The limitation of the 'first resurrection' to the martyrs is here emphasized from the negative side. **The rest of the dead lived not,** not even the saints who had died a peaceful death.

This is the first resurrection. Contrast 'the second death,' ii. 11, vi. 14, xxi. 8. Many commentators, basing their view on the fact that the N. T. (apart from this passage) 'knows of only one, and that a general, resurrection,' seek to avoid the apparent discrepancy by understanding the 'first resurrection' in a wholly spiritual sense, as equivalent to a resurrection 'from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.' This is indeed the theory accepted by most Roman Catholic theologians, from Augustine downwards, making this first resurrection a symbol of admission within the church, the sphere of safety from the evil one. To this there are two fatal objections: (1) This resurrection is plainly the reward or result of martyrdom, and follows not the beginning, but the end, of a Christian life on earth. (2) 'If in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave, then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything' (Alford). Whatever may be the difficulties involved, and however they may have to be solved, we must recognize that John here predicts an anticipative and limited resurrection of the same character as the general resurrection which is to follow.

6. Blessed and holy, &c. See similar pronouncement in xiv. 13, xix. 9. The main purpose of the book is most plainly over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall 7
be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to 8
deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the

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manifest in such a passage as this, which is calculated to brace believers to meet persecution and even martyrdom with exalted courage.

hath part. A Johannine phrase; cf. John xiii. 8.

the second death. See verse 14, xxi. 8, and cf. Matt. x. 28, 'Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell'; also Rom. vi. 9, 10.

they shall be priests, &c. See i. 6, v. 10, and cf. Isa. lxi. 6, 'Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord.' Once more Christ is set on a level with the Father in accordance with the whole Christology of this book.

xx. 7–10. *Loosing of Satan and final conflict.*

7. the thousand years. That the same period is described in verse 3 as 'a little season' confirms what has been said above concerning the interpretation of the 1000 years.

Satan shall be loosed. Those who believe that the 'first resurrection' is a spiritual one, and has already taken place, may maintain further that this prediction also has been fulfilled. Thus Milligan: 'Satan has been already loosed. Hardly was he completely conquered for the saints when he was loosed for the world.' From this point of view the Millennium is now in progress, a theory which, for many reasons, it is difficult to accept, and which involves the apparently insuperable objection that the thousand years of Christ's reign is not the thousand years of Satan's binding, but follows on his being loosed. Whatever secondary interpretation may be given to this passage, its primary meaning is a prediction of Christ's millennial reign on earth coinciding with the binding of Satan, and followed by a final outburst of Satan's power. See Salmond, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 755.

8. to deceive. Cf. verses 3, 10; John vii. 12, 47; 1 John i. 8, ii. 26.

in the four corners of the earth. Cf. vii. 1; Isa. xi. 12; Ezek. vii. 2.

Gog and Magog. In Ezekiel (xxxviii—xxxix), where these

war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured
10 them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

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names first occur, they stand for a 'prince' and the land (Magog) over which he rules; here they seem to stand for two peoples, representative of the lords of nations to be gathered under the banner of Satan. In later apocalyptic literature they are conventional symbols for the world hostile to Israel or the people of God. See Bousset's *Antichrist*, passim. Any attempt to identify them with historical kingdoms is futile.

to gather them together to the war. Cf. xvi. 14, xix. 19. Whether these 'gatherings to war' predict one and the same crisis, or successive manifestations of the same spirit, it is impossible to say. The former would be quite compatible with the writer's method of describing the future as he sees it.

9. they went up over the breadth of the earth. Bousset compares *Enoch*, lvi. 5 (where see Charles' note): 'In those days shall the angels return and hurl themselves upon the East, upon the Parthians and the Medes, to stir up the kings and provoke in them a spirit of unrest, and rouse them from their thrones . . . And they will march up to and tread under foot the land of his elect ones, and the land of his elect ones will be before them a threshing-floor and a path.' Notice that here the prophetic diction of verses 7 and 8 passes over into description.

the camp of the saints . . . and the beloved city signify the same thing, viz. Jerusalem (cf. Pss. lxxviii. 68, lxxxvi. 2).

fire came down out of heaven. Cf. Ezek. xxxviii. 22, xxxix. 6, 'I will send a fire on Magog'; Gen. xix. 24.

10. where are also the beast, &c. See xix. 20, and note.

day and night. Cf. xiv. 11.

Bousset is of opinion that in this passage (verses 1–10) the writer has incorporated an earlier and Jewish tradition regarding the end. The prediction concerning Gog and Magog is a characteristic mark of such tradition. The same tradition probably fixed the duration of the Messianic Kingdom at a thousand years and its scene at Jerusalem. But the fixing of religious hope on an earthly kingdom of righteousness is characteristic rather of prophecy than of apocalyptic; and this chapter, in fact, shews

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon 11
it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away;
and there was found no place for them. And I saw the 12
dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne;
and books were opened: and another book was opened,
which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out
of the things which were written in the books, according
to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which 13
were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead

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how the Christian church held both, as it must continue to do, if it is to hold the truth.

XX. 11-15. *The general Resurrection and last Judgement.*

11. a great white throne: cf. Isa. vi. 1; Dan. vii. 9. This is not necessarily the throne of chap. iv, but the throne of judgement, 'great' in contrast with the 'thrones' of xx. 4, and 'white' with the intensity of Divine purity.

him that sat upon it: the Judge is reverently indicated, not named; cf. iv. 2. He is God the Father as in Dan. vii. 10, and throughout this book; but it must be remembered also that the throne is now 'the throne of God and of the Lamb' (xxii. 1). Cf. 4 Ezra vii. 33, 'The Most High shall appear upon the seat of judgement.'

the earth and the heaven fled away: cf. xvi. 20. The earliest form of this thought is in Isa. li. 6 (cf. Matt. xxiv. 35). In 2 Pet. iii. 10-12 it is through 'fervent heat' that the elements are to 'be dissolved.'

12. the dead: i. e. the 'rest of the dead' who 'lived not' in the first resurrection, verse 5.

books were opened. So in Dan. vii. 10, 'The judgement was set, and the books were opened'; 4 Ezra vi. 20, 'The books shall be opened before the firmament.' Cf. also Mal. iii. 16; *Enoch*, xc. 22.

another book . . . of life. The 'books' are doubtless those in which the deeds of men are recorded, 'the book of life' that which contains the names of the redeemed; see iii. 5 and note, xiii. 8, xvii. 8, and cf. Luke x. 20, Phil. iv. 3.

according to their works. Cf. Rom. ii. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 10, xi. 15.

13. the sea. There is neither any ground nor any parallel for taking this in any but a literal sense, e. g. 'the emblem of the unruly and troubled nations of the earth' (Milligan).

death and Hades: cf. i. 18, vi. 8, and note. It is important here to keep clear the conception of Hades (not 'hell') as the

which were in them: and they were judged every man
14 according to their works. And death and Hades were
cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even*
15 the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in
the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the

'abode into which death ushers men,' without any distinction being necessarily drawn between the righteous and the wicked. Here, as in vi. 8, there seems to be a personification, 'Hades' being put for the power which governs this abode. See Salmond's art. 'Hades' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

14. As above, 'Death and Hades are regarded as two demons, enemies of God,' and as such they are to be destroyed; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54.

the second death. See above verse 6, ii. 11, xxi. 8, and cf. Matt. xxv. 41, 'The eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'

15. Bousset compares *Enoch*, xc. 20, 24, 'I saw till a throne was erected in the pleasant land, and the Lord of the sheep sat Himself thereon, and that other took the sealed books and opened them before the Lord of the sheep. . . . And the judgement was first held over the stars, and they were judged and found guilty, and went to the place of condemnation, and they were cast into an abyss, full of fire and flaming.'

xxi—xxii. 5. THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

The judgement is over. The Lamb has triumphed over his enemies. It remains to shew his union in glory with the church he has redeemed. The detailed description of the glorified church and her union with the Lamb occupies xxi. 9—xxii. 5. But to that is prefixed, as so often in the course of the book, an anticipative and concise account of the same vision (xxi. 1–8).

xxi. 1–8. *The Holy City from afar.*

1. a new heaven and a new earth. See Isa. lxv. 17, 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth'; lxvi. 22; *Enoch*, xci. 16. 'Two words in the New Testament are translated "new," but there is a difference between them. The one contemplates the object spoken of under the aspect of something that has been recently brought into existence, the other under a fresh aspect what had previously existed, but been overthrown. The latter given to word is employed here, as it is also employed in the phrases "a new garment," that is, a garment not threadbare, like an old one; a "new tomb," that is, not one recently hewn out of the

first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, 2
coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great 3

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rock, but one which had never been used as the last resting-place of the dead. The fact, therefore, that the heavens and the earth here spoken of are "new," does not imply that they are now first brought into being. They may be the old heavens and the old earth; but they have a new aspect, a new character, adapted to a new end' (Milligan).

the sea is no more. This, as a feature of the re-created world, is a witness to the estimate of the sea among the ancients. For them it was only turbulent, 'estranging, hostile'; it devoured men with its 'insatiable maw'; it could find no place therefore in the world made perfect.

2. the holy city. See xi. 2, and note.

new Jerusalem. Cf. iii. 12; for 'new' see note above. The closest parallel in N. T. is Paul's phrase in Gal. iv. 26, 'the Jerusalem that is above,' where the representation rests on the Rabbinic idea that there was a Jerusalem 'of the world to come' different from, but corresponding to, the Jerusalem 'that now is'— in modern language, an 'ideal' city. Cf. Heb. xii. 22. See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 374, 404. The idea is further developed in later Jewish apocalypses. Thus in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (chap. iv), written after the fall of Jerusalem, it is announced that the ruined city is not the real Jerusalem; for that had been kept by God from the foundation of the world, and seen in a vision by Moses on Mount Sinai. Similarly, in 4 Ezra x. the heavenly Jerusalem is contrasted with the earthly (Bousset). The commentators further quote from the Rabbinic treatise *Sohar*: 'Deus innovabit mundum suum, et ædificabit Hierosolymam, ut ipsam descendere faciat in medium sui de cœlo, ita ut nunquam destruatur.' For John these earlier speculations supply the imagery in terms of which he describes the ideal city of God. But though described as a city, it is really the figure of a people, and the 'condition localized' in which they dwell. Thus it is quite unnecessary to raise the question 'whether the vision of the new Jerusalem belongs to the end, or whether it expresses what, under the Christian dispensation, is always ideally true.' It does both, in so far as what is now ideally true, a spiritual fact being realized, is one day to be perfectly realized and manifested 'at the end.'

made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. Cf. Isa. lxi. 10—lxii. 5; the idea belongs to the same circle of thought as xix. 7, 9, Matt. xxii. 2, xxv. 10, Luke xii. 36.

voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them,
4 *and be* their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more:
5 the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on

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3. a great voice out of the throne: i. e. the throne in xx. 11. Cf. xix. 5, xvi. 1 ('out of the temple').

the tabernacle of God is with men. The word is the one used in LXX for the tabernacle in the wilderness; cf. Heb. viii. 2, ix. 11; John i. 14, R. V. marg.

he shall dwell with them. The verb is the same as in John i. 14. The dwelling of God among His chosen people, symbolized by the Tabernacle and the Schechinah, is to become a dwelling 'with men,' apart from any material distinction. This dematerializing of the religious hope is in full accordance with the teaching of Jesus (cf. chap. vii and commentary), and a marked advance on the prophecies in Ezek. xxxvii. 27, Zech. viii. 8, Jer. xxxi. 33.

his peoples. The plural, which usually signifies the nations hostile to God, in contrast to the 'people' of Israel (cf. Acts iv. 25; Rom. xv. 10, 11; Rev. x. 11), is a further indication of the breaking down of national barriers; cf. xi. 15.

God himself shall be with them: or, 'He shall be God with them' (Alford). The promise contained in the name 'Emmanuel' (Isa. vii. 14; cf. Matt. i. 23) is now to be perfectly fulfilled. Cf. also Jer. xxiv. 7; Ezek. xi. 20; Zech. viii. 8; Ezek. xlviii. 35, 'The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there.'

and be **their God.** Cf. Gen. xvii. 7; Exod. xxix. 45; Lev. xxvi. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 27; Heb. xi. 16.

4. he shall wipe away every tear. Cf. vii. 17, and note.

death shall be no more. Also from Isa. xxv. 8, but not referred to in Rev. vii. 17. Death is not here personified as in xx. 13.

neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, &c. Cf. Isa. xxxv. 10, lxv. 16-19; *Enoch*, x. 22, 'The earth will be cleansed from all corruption, and from all sin, and from all punishment and torment.'

the first things. Cf. verse 1: the 'first' things are the 'former' things, those which belong to and characterize the old aeon, or dispensation, the 'fashion of this world.'

5. he that sitteth. Cf. iv. 2, 9, vii. 10, xix. 4, &c. **I make**

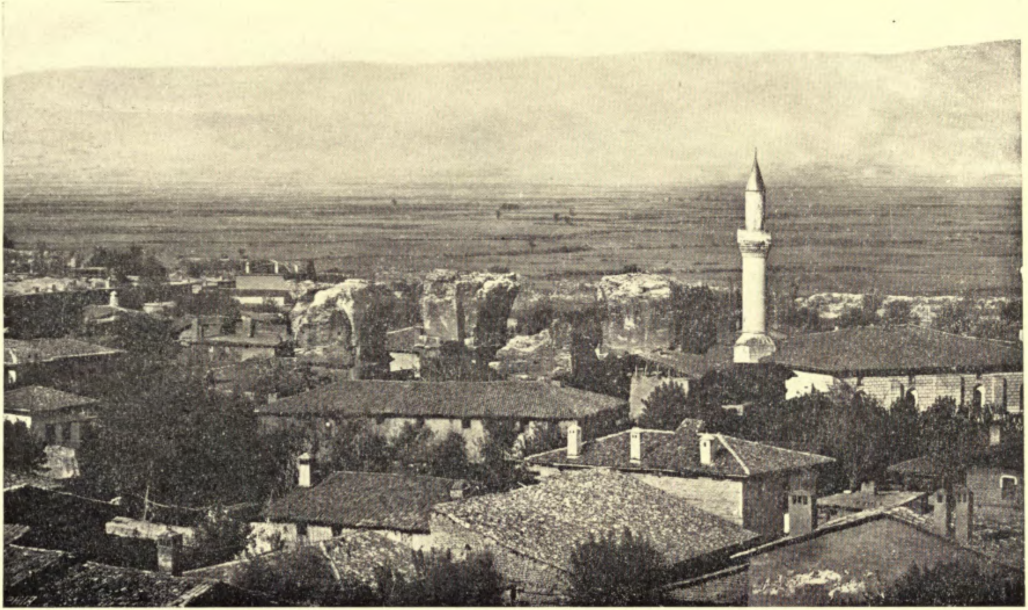

Photo Frith

PHILADELPHIA

the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And
he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true.
And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am 6
the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of
the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit 7
these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my

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all things new. The language is similar to Isa. xliii. 19; Jer. xxxi. 22, but the thought takes a larger sweep, and finds its closest parallel in 2 Cor. v. 17.

And he saith, Write. It is possible that the speaker in this verse is different from him who speaks in the following one, e. g. the angel or the impersonal voice which has already given similar directions to the Apostle, xiv. 13; xix. 9.

faithful and true. The same combination occurs in iii. 14, xix. 11, xxii. 6.

6. he said unto me. Here it can be only the Lord God who speaks; see below, and i. 8.

They are come to pass. Cf. xvi. 17; Luke xiv. 22 (Gk.). There are several various readings of the single word thus translated, one of which yields the rendering of the A. V., 'It is done'; another makes the word a first person singular, and the predicate of the following clause. The reading of the R. V., though it gives an unusual form, is the best attested, and yields an intelligible sense, whether, with Alford, we understand, 'These words are come to pass,' or better, 'They, all the new things, the new heaven and the new earth, are come into being'; cf. Gen. i. 31.

I am the Alpha and the Omega. So in i. 8; in i. 11, xxii. 13 it is Christ who describes himself in the same terms.

unto him that is athirst. Isa. lv. 1; John iv. 13, vii. 37; Matt. v. 6.

the fountain of the water of life. Cf. passages in John above; Rev. xxii. 17, vii. 17, note, and for the freeness of the gift, Isa. lv. 1 (lii. 3); Matt. x. 8; Rom. iii. 24.

7. He that overcometh. This, the culminating promise of the book, is cast in the same form as the promises made by the Son in the Letters to the churches.

shall inherit (cf. Matt. v. 5) **these things:** i. e. the glories of the new world now brought to birth.

I will be his God, &c. The promise is an echo of one which occurs frequently in the O. T.: Gen. xvii. 7, 8; 2 Sam. vii. 14; Jer. xxiv. 7, &c. The promise made first to the founder of the

8 son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

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nation, then to its representatives, is now, through Christ, become the heritage of all who believe.

8. the fearful: not the timid, neither those who 'work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,' but the 'cowardly,' the 'craven.' The substantive is found in 2 Tim. i. 7, 'God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness.'

unbelieving. The word may equally well describe believers who are 'unfaithful' to their belief, and if, as seems probable, the words immediately adjacent refer to those who have once professed Christianity, this is probably the significance to be preferred.

and abominable (Hos. ix. 10, Gk.). Those polluted with abominations such as are referred to in xvii. 4, specially the worship of the Beast, but also in general the iniquities of the world. Cf. with the whole verse *Enoch* (Slavonic), x. 4, 'This place . . . is prepared for those who dishonour God, who work unnatural vice on earth, . . . sorceries, exorcisms, demonic predictions, . . . lies' (Hühn).

sorcerers: *lit.* 'dealers in potions or philtres' (cf. xxii. 15, xviii. 23; Exod. vii. 11; Mal. iii. 5), here 'dealers in magic' of any kind, such as Elymas 'the sorcerer' (Acts xiii. 8) and Simon 'Magus' (Acts viii. 9). Cf. also Acts xix. 19, Rev. xiii. 15. The great part held by magic and sorcery in the popular religion and life of Western Asia is illustrated both by these references and by the copious literature of magic which has come to light. See Deissmann's *Bible Studies*, pp. 273 ff., 323, 352 ff.; also articles in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, 'Exorcist,' 'Magic,' 'Sorcery.'

idolaters. The primary reference is probably to those who suffered themselves to be seduced or driven into the worship of the image of the Beast (xiii. 14, 15).

all liars. Best understood in the light of the parallel in xxii. 15, 'Every one that loveth and maketh a lie.'

the lake that burneth, &c. See xix. 20, notes.

the second death. Cf. ii. 11, xx. 6, 14, 15.

xxi. 9—xxii. 5. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE VISION OF THE CITY.

The Apostle now reverts to the vision of the Heavenly City. He has announced it in verses 1, 2, but been diverted from the full description, which now follows, by the voices which accompanied the vision.

And there came one of the seven angels who had the 9
seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues;
and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew
thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried 10
me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and
shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God, having the glory of God: her light 11
was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper
stone, clear as crystal: having a wall great and high; 12
having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and

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xxi. 9–17. *The measuring of the city.*

9. And there came . . . shew thee. This is identical with the introduction to the vision of the Harlot in xvii. 1, a vision with which there is an obvious, and probably intentional, contrast in this one of the Bride.

the bride. See verse 2, note.

10. in the Spirit. So in xvii. 3, where, however, it is to the wilderness that the Apostle is conveyed.

to a mountain great and high. The imagery here and in what follows is closely parallel to that in Ezek. xl. 2 ff., where the O. T. prophet describes the measuring of the ideal city, 'In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, whereon was as it were the frame of a city on the south.' Cf. also Matt. iv. 8.

the holy city, &c.: repeated from verse 2.

11. having the glory of God: as in verse 23, 'The glory of God did lighten it.' Cf. the announcement regarding the earthly city in Isa. lx. 1, 'The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee'; also Ezek. xliii. 2, 4, 5, 'The glory of the Lord came into the house.'

her light: the word elsewhere means 'luminary' (Phil. ii. 15; Gen. i. 14); here it stands for the splendour which is the effect of the Divine glory shining as the sun in its strength.

a jasper stone, clear as crystal: probably a diamond, but see note on iv. 3, and article in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, 'Stones, Precious.'

12. having twelve gates. The same features are found in Ezekiel's description (xlviii. 31 ff.).

at the gates: *lit.* 'on,' i. e. 'in charge of'; cf. Isa. lxii. 6, 'I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem.'

names written thereon . . . Israel. There is perhaps

names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve
13 tribes of the children of Israel: on the east were three
gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south
14 three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall
of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve
15 names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that
spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to
measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall
16 thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length
thereof is as great as the breadth: and he measured the
city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length

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a contrast with the 'names of blasphemy' with which the scarlet-coloured beast was 'full' (xvii. 3). In Ezek. xlviii. 31, 'The gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel'; where the idea seems to be that to each tribe is assigned its several gate, and so it may be here.

13. on the east were three gates, &c. In Ezekiel the order is different, and again different in Num. ii and *Enoch*, xxxiii–xxxv, where we find a similar enumeration of 'the portals out of which the stars of heaven come forth.'

14. twelve foundations. The three portals on each of the four sides divide the walls into twelve parts, to each of which a different foundation is assigned. These are not buried out of sight, but are probably a continuous and visible basement to the wall.

twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This gives a concrete expression to the idea of Eph. ii. 20, but the parallel is not so close as at first appears. It is only a far-fetched objection to the Johannine authorship which sees an improbability here in the author's assigning to his own name amongst others so honourable a position. The Twelve (whether including or excluding Paul) are here referred to in a corporate and official capacity, and any attempt to individualize them is quite out of place.

15. Cf. with these verses the vision of Ezek. xl. 3 ff., in which also the city and temple are measured with minute detail. Here, as there, the measuring is with a view to the ideal city which is to be—not as in xi. 2.

16. twelve thousand furlongs. This is apparently the length of one side, and exceeds 1,300 English miles. When we realize further that the city is described as a perfect cube, the height of which is also 1,300 miles, it is plain that there is an intentional

and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. And he 17
measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four
cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of an
angel. And the building of the wall thereof was jasper : and 18
the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The founda- 19
tions of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner
of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the
second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth,
emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the 20

'absence of all verisimilitude' (Milligan). The dimensions of the city, like its shape and everything belonging to it, are beyond the compass of human experience.

Bousset points out the curious predictions on the same subject in the *Sibylline Oracles*, according to which the walls of the holy city were to reach as far as Joppa, to glitter as the stars, as the sun, and the moon, and the Messiah was to build within it a Temple and a tower reaching to the clouds.

It is possible to obtain a conceivable picture of the city by supposing it to be built round a mountain of vast height, but this hardly does justice to the emphatic statement that 'the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal.'

17. He measured the wall thereof, whether the height or the width it is impossible to say. In either case the dimensions (two hundred feet) are again conventional figures, 'twelve multiplied by twelve.'

according to **the measure,** &c. : meaning that the measure used by an angel is the same as that used by a man.

xxi. 18-27. *The appearance and character of the city.*

18. jasper (probably 'diamond') . . . **pure gold.** In these as in all the following respects also 'it is evident that the city is thought of as ideally perfect, and not according to the realities or possibilities of things' (Milligan).

19, 20. It has been pointed out that the stones here enumerated as 'adorning' or forming the foundations are, with few exceptions, the same as we find in the description of the high-priest's breastplate (Exod. xxviii. 17 ff., xxxix. 10 ff.), and in the description of Tyre (Ezek. xxviii. 13 ff.). Their modern equivalents cannot in all cases be ascertained with certainty; but probably the 'sapphire' is our *lapis lazuli*; the 'chalcedony,' our agate; the 'emerald,' our emerald; the 'sardonyx,' our onyx-stone; the 'sardius' (iv. 3), a cornelian; the 'chrysolite,' a 'golden

seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz;
the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth,
21 amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls;
each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the
street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent
22 glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God
the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.
23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the
moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten

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yellow' stone, possibly amber or topaz; the 'beryl,' our beryl; the 'topaz,' our chrysolite; the 'chrysoprase,' a stone like the 'chrysolite,' but of paler golden yellow; the 'jacinth,' possibly our sapphire; and the 'amethyst,' our amethyst. But see article, 'Stones, Precious,' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

21. pearls. Contrast Isa. liv. 12, 'I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of pleasant stones.'

the street. Neither the single street, nor the central square, but 'all that the city has of street,' i. e. the streets.

22. I saw no temple therein. The new Jerusalem is an ideal city on an ideal earth. In the historical city the function of the temple had been to symbolize the presence of God in a society which was not wholly and inwardly one with Him. As a local symbol it had at least the appearance of localizing His presence. But in a perfected and redeemed society no such symbol and apparent limitation is required. There is no temple, because the city is all temple. God is no longer anywhere, because He is felt to be everywhere. 'The old Jerusalem was all temple. The mediæval church was all temple. But the ideal of the new Jerusalem was—no temple, but a God-inhabited society.' There is a curious echo of the thought in John iv. 21, 'The hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.'

23. The same thought is found in Isa. lx. 19, 'The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.' The thought is so closely parallel that the Apostle must have had the passage in his mind; and, if so, it is noteworthy that in his closing phrase 'the Lamb' occupies the place of 'thy God' in the prophecy. The thought is again parallel to John viii. 12, 'I am the Light of the world.'

it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb. And the nations 24
shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the
earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof 25
shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no
night there): and they shall bring the glory and the 26
honour of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise 27
enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an
abomination and a lie: but only they which are written
in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a river **22**

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24. the nations shall walk, &c. So in Isa. lx. 3, 'The nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.' It follows that there are 'nations' and 'kings' on the new earth outside the new city; the phrase, 'of them which are saved,' which has crept into the received text, is an effort to make plain the fact that on the new earth these also must be of the redeemed. This is not, however, what the O. T. parallels would suggest. Bousset holds that there is plainly 'an archaic feature of the description here, which originally belongs only to the picture of the renewed (earthly) Jerusalem.'

25, 26. the gates thereof, &c. Cf. Isa. lx. 11, 'Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations.' Gates open continually signify perfect tranquillity and safety; here there is the further thought that even the natural reason for closing them is removed; both danger and darkness are done away.

there shall be no night there. Cf. Zech. xiv. 6, 7; Isa. lx. 1, 2.

27. Cf. Isa. lii. 1 (of the renovated city), and Ezek. xliv. 9. It does not follow that the Apostle anticipates that these evil things will be found on 'the new earth'; his attention is fixed on the 'new city,' and he expresses its absolute immunity from everything unclean in such terms as would be natural of the historical city, and were indeed suggested by the parallels above (but see below).

an abomination. Cf. xvii. 4, xxi. 8, xxii. 15.

the Lamb's book of life. Cf. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xx. 12.

On the above interpretation the new Jerusalem, like the new heaven and the new earth, is still in the future. I have not been able to accept the other interpretation, of which Dr. Milligan's is a typical example. But it should be stated. 'There are

of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the
2 throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the
street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that

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distinct indications in the apocalyptic vision which leave no interpretation possible except one—that the new Jerusalem has come, that it has been in the midst of us for more than eighteen hundred years, that it is now in the midst of us, and that it shall continue to be so wherever its king has those who love and serve him, walk in his light, and share his peace and joy.' 'In the new Jerusalem, therefore, we have essentially a picture, not of the future, but of the present.'

The indications on which this interpretation is based are far outweighed: (1) By the consideration of the place occupied by the vision, *after* the Judgement, and *after* the first and second resurrections, and *after* the Millennium; and (2) by direct statements which connect the vision with a new creation, and with a situation far removed indeed from any experience of Christ's people, even when viewed in the most ideal light. These 'indications,' or some of them at least, are of course difficulties in the way of any other interpretation, but in the light of the O. T. passages, with which the imagery of this chapter is so closely connected, they are easily accounted for as features of the earlier anticipations concerning the idealized city which have been taken over into this. At the same time, of course, the ideal city of the future is an ideal for the present, which should be, and in fact is, continuously realized; although, according to the teaching of this book, no process of development on earth can achieve the heavenly model: it is after the crisis of judgement that all things are made new.

xxii. 1–5. *The river and the tree of life.*

1. a river of water of life. The idea of a river in Paradise comes down from the description of Eden (Gen. ii. 10): with this is combined the symbolical use of 'waters,' 'living waters' for all blessings flowing to man from the presence of God: Jer. ii. 13, 'They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters'; Ezek. xlvii. 1–12, where the fullness of the Divine Presence in the temple and the Land is set forth under the figure of a stream of healing waters; in Ps. xlvi. 4 the river is emphatically presented as one of the features in the city of God. Cf. further Zech. xiv. 8; John iv. 10; Rev. vii. 7, xxi. 6.

out of the throne. In Ezekiel's vision the stream issues from the temple; now that the city is 'all temple,' the ultimate source of healing and fertilizing grace is traced yet further back to the central symbol of the presence of the king.

was the tree of life, bearing twelve *manner of* fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be 3 no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the

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2. the tree of life. The word is in the singular, but the context shews that it is to be understood generically. One tree could not be at once 'in the midst,' and 'on this side and on that.' The river and the street run side by side through the city. In the space between them trees of life are placed in rows on this side and on that. In the old Paradise (Gen. ii. 9) there was but one such tree; in the new one there are many. Whenever a man finds himself within this city, he is within reach both of the river and of the tree of life. There is thus not only a repetition, but an expansion, of the idea in ii. 7 (q. v.).

bearing twelve manner of **fruits,** &c. Cf. Ezek. xlvii. 6-12, and especially 12, 'By the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side shall grow every tree for meat, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month . . . and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing.'

for the healing of the nations: see Ezek. as above. The virtues of the tree of life are similarly described in apocalyptic books, e. g. *Enoch*, xxiv. 4, xxv. 4, 5, 'This tree will then be given to the righteous and humble. By its fruit will life be given to the elect; it will be transplanted to the north, to the temple of the Lord.' See also *Book of Jubilees*, x. 10-13. The reference to the 'nations'—peoples outside the city—who stand in need of healing is part of the earlier conception of a terrestrial but restored Jerusalem, which has not been assimilated to the picture of the celestial city.

3. there shall be no curse any more. From Zech. xiv. 11, 'There shall be no more curse.' Probably we should understand, 'no longer any accursed thing,' no barrier of iniquity (Isa. lix. 2) between men and God. The second half of the verse therefore describes the consequences of the first, as is suggested by the R. V. substituting 'and' for 'but.' The thought is well illustrated from Joshua vii. 12, 'I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted thing from among you.'

the throne of God and of the Lamb. There have been frequent references to the 'throne of God'—Christ has spoken of *his* throne (iii. 2), and the Lamb has been presented in closest proximity to the throne of God (vii. 17); here all these ideas are combined and harmonized: the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb are identical. The combination is Johannine (John xiv. 23). Cf. *Enoch*, lxii. 14, 'The Lord of spirits will abide over

Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall do him
4 service; and they shall see his face; and his name *shall*
5 *be* on their foreheads. And there shall be night no
more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of
sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they
shall reign for ever and ever.
6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and

---

them, and with that Son of man will they eat, and lie down, and rise up for ever and ever' (Hühn).

his servants shall do him service: cf. vii. 15. The words are different in their connotation, but the distinction cannot be reproduced in English. 'His *douloi* ("bond-servants") shall render Him *latreia* ("the service of ministry").' The reward of submissive service here is the call to more honourable and more understanding ministry above (Matt. xxiv. 45–47). They who see His face serve Him with unclouded vision and undivided love.

4. they shall see his face. Theirs is that privilege which had been forbidden to men on earth (Exod. xxxiii. 20), anticipated as the crowning experience of bliss (Ps. xvii. 15), foretold as the portion of the pure (Matt. v. 8), and promised as the condition of perfect conformity to Christ (1 John iii. 2; cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 12).

his name shall be **on their foreheads.** See vii. 3, note, xiv. 1; and contrast the name of the beast 'upon the forehead' of such as worship him. In each of these phrases—'his servants,' 'his face,' 'his name'—it is God who is referred to; but as with the throne, so with these, they are 'of God and the Lamb.'

5. And there shall be night no more: as above, xxi. 25.

they need no light of lamp, &c.: as above, ii. 23.

they shall reign for ever and ever. Cf. xx. 4, 6, the promised reign of a thousand years, and contrast the limitations there with the indefinite enlargement of the promise here—'his servants,' 'for ever and ever.' The thought of the never-ending dominion of the 'saints of the Most High,' or 'the holy people itself most high,' comes down from Dan. vii. 18, 27. Cf. Rev. v. 10, xi. 15, xii. 10. The consummated dominion of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25) carries with it the dominion of his saints, his new creation, which was symbolized in the first creation (Gen. ii. 28; Heb. ii. 7, 8).

xxii. 6–21. THE EPILOGUE.

The visions are at an end (cf. Dan. vii. 27). What follows consists of a series of solemn confirmations, assurances, and instructions.

true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. And behold, I 7 come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

And I John am he that heard and saw these things. 8 And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these

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xxii. 6–9. *Confirmation of the revelation by the angel.*

6. he said unto me. It is an angel who speaks (verse 9), probably the one referred to in i. 1, to whom had been specially committed the function of 'signifying' to John the things that must shortly come to pass.

These words (i. e. the contents of this book) **are faithful and true.** They partake of the character of him to whom and through whom (i. 1) they were given (iii. 14; cf. xix. 9).

the Lord (the Almighty), **the God of the spirits of the prophets.** So R. V. for 'of the holy prophets.' Cf. Num. xvi. 22, xxvii. 16, 'God of the spirits of all flesh.' In the *Book of Enoch*, 'Lord of the spirits' is the constantly-recurring title of the Most High (xxxvii. 2, xxxviii. 2, &c.). The special turn given to the thought here marks the writer's interest in 'the prophets,' and his sense of his own relation to them. Cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

sent his angel, &c. So in i. 1 (q. v.).

7. behold, I come quickly. Though these words are the words of Christ (iii. 11), it does not follow that they are here spoken by him. 'The speech passes into the words of Christ, reported by the angel; so in verse 12 and in xi. 3' (Alford).

Blessed is he that keepeth, &c. Cf. the blessing in i. 3, with which this is closely parallel. The phrase 'of this book' is probably an explanatory addition by the writer to the words of the angel, or the words may have been pronounced after the book was actually written. Observe once more how emphatically the writer attaches himself and his work to the order and work of the prophets. The apostolic consciousness is throughout subordinate to that of the Christian prophet.

8. And I John am he, &c. With this solemn asseveration of his participation in the visions cf. Dan. xii. 5; also Rev. i. 9.

I fell down, &c.: as in xix. 10, where see notes. If this were not the angel of xix. 10, but the one through whom the whole series of visions had been mediated, it is not difficult to understand a renewed and yet more imperious impulse in the Apostle to do homage to such a power.

9 things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the
11 prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that

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9. The words of the angel are not properly described as a rebuke, though they convey an emphatic prohibition. They reveal at once the subordinate position even of this great power, and the exalted privilege both of **the prophets** and of **them which keep the words of this book.** They are fellow servants of the angels, 'in so far as they possess and preserve a heavenly revelation.'

xxii. 10–15. *Warnings and promises.*

10. he saith unto me. It would not be consistent with the Christology of the book to see in the speaker—who has refused to receive worship, and claimed only equal rank with the prophets —Christ himself. On the other hand, at verse 15, it is Jesus who speaks. Whether it is the angel or the Saviour who speaks here, it is not easy to decide. If it is the angel, he speaks yet more clearly in the name of Christ. But probably it is from this point that the voice of Christ is heard.

Seal not, &c. This is in contrast to the instruction given to the Seer (x. 4) and to Daniel (xii. 4). In the latter case, the motive is probably the long time that has yet to elapse before the end. It is to be reserved for another generation than that of Daniel. Cf. also Isa. viii. 16, 17, where, because the prophet perceives that the Lord hideth His face, and is constrained to an indefinite waiting, he gives the command: 'Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.' Here, on the other hand, 'the time is at hand'; the people whom John addresses are those on whom 'the end of the world has come'; the revelation is for immediate use; therefore it requires not to be sealed.

11. He that is unrighteous, &c.: more literally, 'He that doeth unrighteousness, let him do unrighteousness still,' or, 'Let the wrongdoer continue to do wrong.' The present era, which is 'a day of salvation,' is so nearly at an end that there is hardly room for change. Cf. Ezek. iii. 27, xx. 39; Dan. xii. 10, and Matt. xxvi. 45, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand.'

is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. Behold, I come 12
quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the 13
Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may 14
have the right *to come* to the tree of life, and may enter

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let him be made holy still: *lit.* 'let him go on being made holy.' Some, as Alford and Holtzmann, give the verb a reflexive force—'let him sanctify himself still.'

The principle which underlies the whole verse applies only to the moment before the Judgement breaks, the point when the Bridegroom comes, and the door is shut, when choice is sealed and opportunity ends. The thought is worked out with great power in Browning's *Easter Day*, § xvi. ff.

12. my reward is with me: i. e. the reward I have to give. The phrase is from Isa. xl. 10 (cf. lxii. 11, LXX, 'thy Saviour hath come, having his own reward'), where it is significant that it is 'the Lord God' that is to come: 'his reward is with him, and his recompence before him.' The best illustration of the phrase is found in our Lord's parables of the Judgement, e. g. the Ten Virgins, the Talents and the Pounds.

to render to each man, &c. Job xxxiv. 11, 'For the work of a man shall he render unto him, And cause every man to find according to his ways'; Prov. xxiv. 12; Matt. xvi. 27 (the Son of man); Rom. ii. 6 (God).

13. I am the Alpha and the Omega. Here, as in i. 11, it is Christ who claims this title; in i. 8 and xxi. 6 it is the Father. Alford and others hold, however, that in all four cases it belongs to the Father, 'whether we assume the words to be spoken by Christ in God's name, or by the Eternal Father Himself.' See on i. 8.

14. they that wash their robes. This rendering of the R. V. rests upon a reading which differs only in a few letters from that represented by the A. V., and is supported by preponderating MS. authority. It is an abbreviation of the phrase in vii. 14 (q. v.), and must be interpreted in connexion with that passage. The cleansing is 'through faith, by his blood' whom God set forth to be a propitiation.

that they may have the right to come **to the tree of life:** or, more literally, 'the power over the tree of life,' i. e. liberty to use it. For the tree of life see verse 2, and ii. 7.

and may enter in by the gates. This right of entry of

15 in by the gates into the city. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

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course precedes logically the right over the tree of life which stands within the city.

But 'this is the blessed paradox of faith. It is difficult to say which privilege enjoyed by the believer comes first, and which second. Rather may all that he enjoys be looked on as given at once, for the great gift to him is Christ himself, and in him everything is included. He is the gate of the city, and as such the way to the tree of life; he is the tree of life, and they who partake of him have a right to enter the city and dwell there' (Milligan).

15. Without are the dogs, &c. The privilege of entrance is emphasized by this list of those who are excluded. See xxi. 8, and notes. By 'dogs' are meant impure, lascivious persons; cf. Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2. Bousset says that it was 'the old description of the heathen or Gentiles.'

the sorcerers. Cf. ix. 21, xviii. 23. Here the word is probably used literally of the whole class of necromancers and dealers in magic, who flourished so greatly at this period. Cf. the association of 'sorcery' with 'idolatry' in Gal. v. 20; and see also Deissmann's *Bible Studies*, p. 271 ff., and Whitehouse in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. 'Magic.'

every one that loveth and maketh a lie. Here also, as in xxi. 8, the love and practice of falsehood stands at the end of the list.

xxii. 16-20. *The solemn witness of Christ and his prophet to the visions.*

16. I Jesus have sent mine angel. The figure, which has been behind the angel from the beginning of the visions (i. 13-17), in whose name the angel has spoken, now steps forth, as it were, to authenticate the angel's testimony.

unto you. The plural probably indicates the Christian prophets with whom John shared the Divine illumination.

the root and the offspring of David. Cf. v. 5; Isa. xi. 1, 10 ('a shoot out of the stock of Jesse'); Matt. i. 1, xxii. 42.

the bright, the morning star. There is a reference to the morning star in ii. 28, but the sense must be different here. The idea is probably to be traced from Num. xxiv. 17, through Matt. ii. 2

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he 17
that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst,
let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life
freely.

I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the 18
prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them,
God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in
this book: and if any man shall take away from the 19
words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away
his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city,
which are written in this book.

He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come 20
quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

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and Luke i. 78. Judaism found in Balaam's prophecy a reference to the Messiah, and probably the false Messiah of A. D. 132 owed his name, Bar Cochba ('son of a star'), to this interpretation. The figure finds its realization in Christ who leads in the eternal day.

17. the Spirit and the bride. The bride is the church—here the church on earth, waiting for the coming of the Lord. The Spirit, too, says, 'Come,' by teaching her thus to pray (Rom. viii. 16). For the figure of the bride cf. xxi. 2; Gal. iv. 26; Eph. v. 25 ff.

he that heareth: *scil.* the voice of the Spirit and the bride take up the cry. For a poetical interpretation of the whole figure see Tennyson's *St. Agnes' Eve.*

he that is athirst: cf. Isa. lv. 1; John vii. 37, xxi. 6. There is a reciprocal invitation—from him that heareth, to Christ, that he will 'come'; and from Christ, or the prophet who speaks in his name, to the thirsty one, that he will come—to Christ.

he that will, . . . freely: so Isa. lv. 1, 'Without money and without price.' The closing sentence of the verse adds nothing to the preceding one; it only makes the same thought more definite.

18, 19. A similar warning is found in Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32. It refers of course to the book's essential contents or teaching, not merely to single words which might be added or omitted by a copyist. And it refers to this book only, not to all or any other of the books of the N. T.

19. from the tree of life: so the R. V., following all the best authorities. The penalty is therefore the loss of those very privileges which are promised in verse 14 to them that 'wash their robes,' namely, access to the city, and power to partake of the tree.

20. In this final assurance of the Lord, **I come quickly,** the

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints, Amen.

Book of Revelation finds its key-note again and so 'sinks to rest,' with the acquiescent reply of faith, **Amen: come, Lord Jesus.** It opened with the promise to reveal the things which must quickly come to pass, and it goes out on the assurance that he, for whose coming these things are the prelude, is nigh at hand, even at the door.

21. The benediction follows as in the Epistles. Possibly it is another indication (cf. i. 3) that the book was intended to be read aloud in the religious assemblies of Christians.

INDEX

[*The Numerals refer to the Pages.*]

Abaddon, 208.
Abyss, 204, 221, 263, 279.
Alford, 36, 126, 128, 151, 168, 172, 174, 177, 180, 192, 203, 212, 232, 234, 267.
Almighty, 138, 225, 253.
Alogi, 39, 45.
Alpha and Omega, 128, 301.
Amen, 155, 175, 195.
Angels, 16, 135, 163, 255.
Antipas, 49, 142.
'Apocalypse,' meaning of, 13.
Apocalypse, interpretation of, 9.
— in the Church, 6.
— in the Canon, 8.
Apocalypse of Baruch, 17, 144, 164, 184, 186, 204, 226, 260, 287.
Apocalyptic literature, 13 ff.
— characteristics of, 25 f.
— common material, 32.
— pseudonymous, 31.
Apollyon, 208.
Apostles, 137, 292.
Ark, 14, 144.
Armageddon, 258.
Assumption of Moses, 17, 186.
Augustine, 14.
Authorship, internal evidence, 34 f.
— external evidence, 37 f.

Babylon, 63, 246, 260.
Bacon, B. W., 36.
Balaam, 143.
Barnabas, Epistle of, 14.
Bartlet, J. V., 48.
Beast, the, 53, 221.
— the Second, 239.
Book, the Little, 213.
— the Sealed, 168.
Bottomless Pit, 204.
Bousset, 37, 44, 57, 59, 126, 178, 190, 193, 204, 209, 211, 237, 240, 247, 256, 284, 293.
Bowls, the Seven, 251, 254.
Brimstone, 247.
Browning, R. B., 301.
Bruston, 48.

Calvin, 9.
Censer, 199.
Charles, R. H., 14, 16, 208, 230, 249.
Cherubim, 165.
Cheyne, T. K., 161.
Chiliastic controversy, 7.
Christology, 71 f., 133, 145, 148, 158.
Chronology. 67.
Clement of Alexandria, 37, 48.
Construction, 5, 67 f., 160, 175 f.
Cyril of Jerusalem, 40.

Dan, Tribe of, 189.
Dante, 157.
Date, 48 f.
Davidson, A. B., 134.
Day of Judgement, 16.

Deissmann, 191, 194, 241, 269, 290, 303.
Dionysius, 6, 39.
'Divine,' 123.
Domitian, 48, 64.
Dragon, 62, 66, 279.
Driver, S. R., 205, 218.

Elders, the four and twenty, 162.
Emerald, 161.
Emperor-worship, 142.
Enoch, Book of, 14 f., 166, 167, 183, 194, 200, 204, 209, 229, 247, 249, 255, 277, 284, 286, 288, 297.
Ephesus, 136.
Epiphanius, 49.
Esra, Fourth Book of, 18 f. 139, 274, 285.
Euphrates, 209, 257.
Eusebius, 38, 40, 48.

Fourth Gospel, 7, 45 f.
Frogs, 257.

Galba, 49, 53 f., 235.
Gnosis, 52.
'God of Heaven,' 224.
Gog and Magog, 283.
Gunkel, 23, 32.

Hades, 133, 285.
Hallelujah, 272.
Heine, 147.
Holtzmann, 12, 36, 277.
Horns, Ten, 235.
Howe, John, 157.

Ignatius, 38, 130, 151.
Incense, 172, 200.
Irenæus, 37, 38, 48, 55, 58.

Jasper, 161, 291, 293.
Jerome, 8.
Jerusalem, the New, 154.
Jews, 140, 153.
Jezebel, 146.
Johannine, 149, 159, 276, 294.
John, 34 f., 125, 129.
John the Presbyter, 40 f.
Jude, Epistle of, 16.
Justin Martyr, 37.

Lake of Fire, 279.
Lamb, the, 73, 171, 243, 252.
— marriage of the, 273.
Laodicea, Council of, 155.
Lightfoot, Bp., 48, 135, 141.
Lion of Tribe of Judah, 170.
Locusts, 205.
Lord's Day, 130.
Luther, 8, 10.

Manna, hidden, 144.
Mark of the Beast, 241.
Measuring, significance of, 217.
Melanchthon, 9.
Michael, 229.
Millennium, 281.
Milligan, 126, 135, 136, 156, 169, 176, 183, 188, 206, 212, 217, 233, 251, 255, 274, 282, 287, 293, 295, 302.
Mommsen, 50.
Mystery, 133, 214, 262.

Name, 144, 154.
Napoleon, 10.
Nero, 58.
Nero Legend, 56.
Nicolaitans, 139, 146.
Number of the Beast, 58, 242.
Numbers, 210.
— third part, 201.
— 666, 241.
— 144,000, 192, 243.
— 1,600 (furlongs), 251.
— 12,000 (furlongs), 292.

Origen, 17, 39.

Papias, 38, 42.
Paradise, 139, 143.

Parthians, 55, 56, 178, 209, 257.
Patmos, 129.
Penny, 179.
Pergamum, 51, 65, 141.
'Princes,' 186.
Prophecy, 275.
Prophets, 225, 255.

Ramsay, W. M., 50, 136, 142, 151, 155.
'Reader,' 120.
Roman State, 21.
Rossetti, Cristina, 129, 157, 159, 180, 195, 244.
Ryle, Bp., 165.

Salmond, S. D. F., 139, 281, 283, 286.
Sardis, 149.
Sardius, 161, 293.
Satan, 228, 231.
— deep things of, 148.
— synagogue of, 140, 152.
— throne of, 142.
Schoen, 60.
Schürer, 147, 277.
Scorpions, 206.
Seal of God, 206.
Sealing, significance of, 191.
Seals, the Seven, 176 f.
Second Death, 141.
Secrets of Enoch, 126, 163, 164.
Seven Churches, the, 64, 131, 135 f.
Shepherd of Hermas, 25.
Sibylline Oracles, 186, 222.
Smith, G. A., 26, 258.
Smyrna, 140.
Sohar, 222.
Son of God, 145.
Son of Man, a, 129, 131, 249.
— the, 15.
Sorcery, 52, 290.
Stevens, G. B., 73, 170.
Suetonius, 56.
Symbols, Book of Life, 151, 238.
— Diadems, 54.
— Eagle, 20.
— Glassy Sea, 165, 252.
— Golden Candlesticks, 131, 137.
— Heads and Horns, 21, 53, 171, 235, 264.
— Hidden Manna, 144.
— Key of David, 152.
— Lamps, Seven, 126.
— Lion, 21, 170.
— Little Book, 213.
— Morning Star, 149.
— Name, 144, 154, 276.
— Names of Blasphemy, 54.
— Pillar, 154.
— River of Life, 296.
— Root of David, 170.
— Stars, Seven, 132, 137, 150.
— Waters of Life, 197.
— White Stone, 144.
— Wine of Wrath, 246.
— Woman and Son, 22.

Tabernacle, 196, 253.
Teaching of Twelve Apostles, 130.
Temple at Jerusalem, 52.
Tertullian, 37, 49.
Testament of XII Patriarchs, 59, 164, 190, 227.
'Testimony of Jesus,' Q.E.P., 130, 181.
Thunders, the Seven, 213.
Time, 214.
— ten days, 141.
— half an hour, 198.
— forty and two months, 218, 237.
— three days and a half, 223.
— 1,260 days, 229.
— short, 232.
— one hour, 264.
— a thousand years, 281.
Trumpets, the Seven, 201.
Thyatira, 145.

Vespasian, 56.
Virgins, 244.
Vischer, 11, 58.
Völter, 58, 59.

Weiss, B., 44, 48, 130.
Weizsäcker, 60, 163.
Westcott, Bp., 48, 128, 166.
Weyland, 59.
Whitehouse, O. C., 190, 230, 303.
Witnesses, the Two, 62, 216, 219.
Wormwood, 203.

Zwingli, 9.

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